

ST JOHNSTOUN;

OR,

JOHN, EARL OF GOWRIE.

all crimes and tyrants cease but with the world !
CAMPBELL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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TO THE INHABITANTS
OF PERTH,
(FORMERLY ST JOHNSTOUN,) THIS TALE,
OF THE LAST EARL OF GOWRIE,
IS DEDICATED.

PREFATORY NOTICE

TO THE

READER.

IN order to remove from your mind, most respected Reader, any suspicion that the following story is the figment of my own brain, I hold it to be necessary that I should make known to you the manner in which it came into my possession ; and which I purpose to accomplish in the easiest manner to myself, by presenting you with the copy of a letter lately written by me

to a particular friend of mine upon this subject. But as it must occupy a number of pages, and, of course, take up some considerable time in the perusal; and as I perfectly agree with the Prince of Novelists, that prefaces are seldom or never read, I shall at present defer giving the history of its discovery; and, availing myself of the high example of some of my predecessors, reserve it to form the materials of a concluding Address.—I have been led to this determination by my great anxiety that it should be read, in order to its being perfectly understood, that little more has been done than to copy an old MS., which pretends (with what probability let the reader judge for himself) to explain

one of the **darkest** and most mysterious pages **of the History of Scotland**. But should **any** one doubt, after the faithful account given in the concluding Letter, **of the manner in which the MS. was discovered**, let him repair to the spot **there** mentioned as the place of its concealment, when he will be convinced of my veracity; that is to say, if he has ingenuity enough, by following my directions, to find out the aperture by which I entered. Yet should he fail in the attempt, do not let him presumptuously judge by the erring rules of what he may term probability, and venture to pronounce them the measure **of possibility**, by affirming that I have **not** spoken truth; but rather let him judge with can-

dour, and believe, that the materials of these volumes were found, as I have stated, in the before-mentioned Letter, which is a true copy of that written to my friend ; premising only, that the names of persons I have had occasion to mention, are changed for those that are feigned ; and that in many of the leading incidents, I have added the traditions of the neighbourhood to the account given in the ancient MS.—And now, kind Reader, I have only to express my hope that you will be as much amused by the following pages, as is sincerely wished by

Your most obedient
humble servant,

PEREGRINE ROVER.

September 3, 1823.



ST. JOHNSTOWN ;

OR,

JOHN, EARL OF GOWRIE.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

Religious spite and pious spleen bred first
The quarrel which so long the bigots nurse.

TATE.

FROM the year 1579, in which King James the Sixth of Scotland assumed the reins of government, until the year 1600, the period at which our story commences, his conduct and views had been the subject of anxious investigation to the Roman Pontiff, and all of the Catholic persuasion.

The innovations, which at that time threatened the Roman Catholic religion with an-

nihilation, redoubled the zeal and enterprising spirit of its professors. It was therefore with the greatest satisfaction that they beheld James, who was born of Popish parents, choose for his counsellors and favourites members of their Church, and they continued to view with pleasure his constant dissensions with the Presbyterian Kirk, and the reluctance with which he granted her demands; nor did they abandon their hopes, when, in the year 1592, the Presbyterian church-government had risen to a degree of power greater than it had ever yet attained. In that year, the machinations of the Popish Lords and the Earl of Bothwell, together with the King's being suspected of having connived at the murder of the Earl of Murray, had rendered his people extremely discontented; and in order, by a popular act, to regain his ascendancy, James publicly avowed his devoted attachment to the Kirk of Scotland, and granted a repeal of many statutes inimical to her interests; he also allowed the

authority of the General Assembly for calling meetings, whose acts should be considered valid, without the presence or assent of the King. Yet these proceedings, which accorded so ill with his former indulgence to the Catholics, and his well-known high and unbounded ideas of his own prerogative, did not deceive those who were accustomed to penetrate deeper than the surface, and by such he was considered as still secretly attached to the Catholic religion.

But, in the year 1600, the Catholics became confirmed in their belief of the King of Scotland's intention to support their interests ; for at that time so great a revolution took place in the affairs of the Kirk, that the dominion of the King, in ecclesiastical matters, became absolute. He had restored the Popish Lords to their forfeited estates and honours, and reinstated in the temporalities of his benefice Beaton, the Popish Archbishop of Glasgow, whom he had sent on an embassy to France. Lord Hume was also despatched by him on a se-

cret mission to the Pope, and his Holiness had received a letter, signed by James, (either written by the King, or the contrivance of his secretary,) wherein he expressed his great regard for the Pontiff, and his determination to consider the Catholics with favour, and soliciting him to make Drummond, Bishop of Vaison, who was by birth a Scotchman, a Cardinal, that the communication between the Holy See and Court of Scotland, might be more facilitated. At this time, likewise, Sir James Lindsey was employed to interest the English Papists in favour of James's claim to the crown of England, as the advanced age of Elizabeth rendered it probable that the time drew near, when her throne would be occupied by another. The prior claim of the King of Scotland directed all eyes to him as her successor; and, to strengthen James in his attachment to the Catholics, and stimulate him to remain steady to their interests, Pope Clement VIII. issued two briefs to the people of England, enjoining

them to unite in using all expedients to prevent any monarch from ascending the throne of England on the death of Elizabeth, who was **not** of the Catholic religion, and who would **not** swear to maintain and defend it. All these circumstances combined, created the most extravagant hopes in the breasts of the Roman Catholics, and they already anticipated a complete triumph over Protestantism, both in Scotland and England.

It was at this juncture that John, Earl of Gowrie, a Scotch nobleman of powerful influence, who had been absent from his native country for six years, was upon the eve of returning to it. He was the lineal descendant of the ancient house of Ruthven, who were the earliest leaders, and most zealous supporters of the Reformation, and he cherished the same sentiments in favour of Protestantism which had actuated his forefathers, and which he had further strengthened by a recent residence of three months at Geneva, with the venerable Theodore

Beza, the colleague of Calvin, and one of the principal pillars of the reformed Church. This nobleman was son to William, Earl of Gowrie, who was beheaded at Stirling, during James's minority, in the year 1584, and grandson to that Lord Ruthven, whose share in the death of David Rizzio is so well known.

James had taken the utmost pains to conciliate this young man, who was possessed of wealth and power superior to any other nobleman in Scotland, by bestowing many favours on him, and by writing to him with his own hand, after he left Scotland to finish his education at the University of Padua, which proves that the King had been always desirous of securing the advantages likely to result from making a favourable impression on his mind, and renders it probable that his youth gave James hopes that he might, by loading him with benefits, attach him exclusively to himself and his interests. It was also probable, that, as the Earl received the favours of the

King with respect and gratitude, he did not bear resentment against his sovereign for the death of his father, but entirely attributed that event to the plots of his enemies. But, notwithstanding these probabilities, it may be supposed that there were fears on the side of James and the Catholics, arising out of the general character of the Earl's family for intrepidity and firmness, as well as staunch attachment to Protestantism ; nor, in that age, would there have been any thing singular in his availing himself at some future period of his influence, to revenge his father's death ; nor was it unlikely that he might prove a stumbling-block to the Romish Church, who beheld, with a jealous eye, the communion he held with Beza, and the visit paid by him to the court of Elizabeth, on his way to Scotland, at the instigation of her ambassador, with whom he formed a friendship at Paris. Add to this, that they were not ignorant that his return to his native land was hailed, by both English and Scottish Protestants, as

favourable to the reformed religion, and we may well suppose his actions were considered of no small consequence, and were likely to be most sedulously watched, and every means adopted to counteract in them whatever James, or the Catholics, might imagine prejudicial to their interests; and the interference of the Jesuits in the politics of Europe at that period being too notorious to admit of refutation, the Pope could not have selected a more appropriate agent to fill the office of spy at the court of Scotland, than the member of that fraternity who appears in the following story,—chosen from that association, who owed their existence to a design formed by their founder, Ignatius Loyala, of combating the enlightened Luther, and the truths which emanated from that divine Book of holy writ, by which he had withdrawn the Papal veil from the eyes of so great a part of the world, and which threatened the Romish tenets with total extirpation. It was the system of the Society of Jesus, that, where

the Church was concerned, the end sanctified the means employed for her welfare ; and the fruits of this doctrine of expediency were, of course, when her supposed interests demanded it, treachery, treason, and assassination. This Society was subjected to few laws in common with other religious orders of their faith, that their services might be untrammelled by any vows which could militate against the entire devotion they swore to the mandates of their General, or Superior. A regular account was kept, at all the seminaries established for the education of the intended members, of the dispositions, talents, and attainments, of the respective pupils, which, being regularly transmitted to the Superior, and a strict watch kept over them during the years of their probation, enabled him to choose with certainty, such instruments as were most fit for any service to which he might destine them. Their General was chosen for life, and possessed the most unbounded power. He alone nominated the officers employed

in the government of the Society, whom he could remove at pleasure ; in him was also vested the uncontrolled disposal of the immense revenues and incalculable riches of the order ; and to his commands the members were not only sworn to render the strictest outward obedience, but to resign their wills and understandings.

That these men were employed by the Pope to forward his views in every country in the world, and every court in Europe, we are assured by all historians who have written of the times in which they flourished.

Having said thus much by way of explanation, it now remains for the enlightened reader of the following story to judge how much credit he ought to attach to many of its leading incidents,—for which there is no other authority save tradition, and the foresaid ancient manuscript.

CHAPTER II.

Be as kind an Hostess as you have been to me, and you can never fail of another husband.

DRYDEN.

It was about eight o'clock in the evening of a stormy day, near the end of the month of February 1600, that a boat from a foreign galley, then lying in the Frith of Forth, put on shore a male and female passenger opposite to the little town of Musselburgh. The female, who was enfeebled by a long and tempestuous voyage, leaned for support on her companion, who appeared too much encumbered by something he carried under his long and ample cloak, to render her any assistance.

The night was extremely cold, and a boisterous north-wind impelled volumes of black clouds across the moon, which caused

the travellers, ever and anon, to be involved in darkness—but the distance was short, and they soon reached the town of Musselburgh, where, addressing the first person they encountered, they inquired for a house of public reception. The man whom they happened to accost, answered their question in that good-humoured tone of voice which carries with it assurance of a certain benevolent good will, and which at once dissipates the fear of giving trouble.

“ Follow me,” said he, “ and I’ll tak ye to the hostelry of Loretto; and I’ll be caution, an’ ye were King James himsel’, ye might be content wi’ your lodging.—I ken the house weel, for I serve the mistress wi’ fish, and a sonsy woman is she, and weel deserving o’ the wale o’ my catching, for she is aye reasonable wi’ the price, and gi’es me a soup brandy-wine forby to warm my inside withal. But,” said he, making a sudden halt, “ I gang ou’r fast, I’m doubting, for that neebour o’ yours, who seems unco silly and canna weel keep up wi’ us; she

had better tak' haud o' me, and I'll gang at mair leisure, for ye seem ou'r sair laden to help her yoursel'; but we have na far gait to gang at ony rate, and then she will be weel seen till, for the Lady o' Loretto is unco kind and civil till her guests."

"The Lady of Loretto," said the woman who had accepted his proffered service, and now leaned upon his arm, "that title sounds strangely in my ears. I pray you, why is she so called?"

"Because ye maun ken," replied the fisherman, "that the hostel of Loretto was once a part o' the auld bigging that was sae meikle thought o' a while syne, when the deevil's skipper, the Pope, guided the helm; but I'm thinking ye'll be of my notion once ye win in, that it's put to a wysser-like purpose now, than when it cuitled up a wheen lazy monks, at the expense o' poor deluded creatures, who thought themselves weel repaid, (bless their doited souls!) whan the cursed auld hypocrites gied them some bit rotten timmer to glour at, that they call-

ed a piece of the true cross, or tell'd them the Lady o' Loretto wad gar their sins be forgeen them: now, I say," continued he, " that *our* Lady o' Loretto is wordye a thousand o' her, for though she taks your money, she gi'es ye something better for it than leeing promises."

Toward the conclusion of this speech, which was uttered with much glee, the woman, with an involuntary shudder of horror, withdrew her arm from her supporter, and inwardly ejaculated, " Holy Mother of God, forgive me for having listened to this blasphemy!" and laying her hand on her fellow traveller, while the fisherman proceeded a few steps before, she said, in an under voice,

" Pray for me, my brother, lest I shrink from the arduous task appointed me in this land of reprobation."

" Think not so meanly of yourself, as to dread that any sufferings you may sustain, holy mother," replied her companion, " can prevent your persevering in the blessed pur-

pose of saving a soul from the damning grasp of the heretics ; and, trust me, the fears you have now expressed, are entirely occasioned by bodily weakness, which ever operates, in some degree, upon the mind.”

“ I am, indeed,” said she, “ forespent with travel, and can hardly drag along my wearied limbs.”

“ Ye will ha’e nae need to trail them meikle farther, for here we are at the gate,” said the fisherman, as he pushed it open ; and they perceived by the light of the moon, which now shone more clearly, that they stood before a building of an ancient and peculiar form, the stones of which were profusely ornamented with carving. It had been erected some time after the original monastic pile, when the fame of this chapel, dedicated to our Lady of Loretto, had drawn to it numerous crowds of devotees, and had been appropriated to the use of such strangers as could not be accommodated in the town of Musselburgh ; for inns were at that time thinly scattered in Scotland, and

the traveller, whether bound on a journey of business or devotion, was received, and hospitably entertained, at the numerous religious houses, which, from the magnificence of their architecture, and the cultivation of the lands appertaining to them, had, before the Reformation, enriched and beautified the aspect of the country. From the gate our travellers crossed a court-yard surrounded by a high wall, and entered the porch of the building, from whence they followed their guide into a kind of hall, the ceiling of which appeared to reach to the roof of the edifice, the upper chambers opening into a corridor or gallery, underneath which were corresponding small apartments or cell's, having each a door to the common hall, which, from its size, was capable of accommodating many separate parties, or such large meetings as might be called together on public occasions. In the middle of this apartment, stood the mistress of the mansion, giving orders to a damsel, who was leaning over the rail of the gallery to re-

ceive her instructions. The jolly figure of our hostess was clad in a kirtle of scarlet woollen cloth, of the brightest hue; and as fine cloths of that description were not then the manufacture of Scotland, but usually imported from France, and consequently bore an extravagant price, this circumstance, together with a massy silver chain, by which was suspended from her side a ponderous bunch of keys, instructed the beholder that she possessed both wealth, and an inclination to display it. Notwithstanding, however, this Lady of Loretto's pomp of exterior, (which, perhaps, she might think it incumbent on her to exhibit, as successor to that splendidly attired lady whose representative she was, according to the designation bestowed on her by her facetious neighbours;)—yet, was it far from her intention to intimate thereby, that she was in any measure above her business, for on all occasions she was a most active, and, as the fisherman said, a kind and obliging landlady, and fully aware, that her atten-

tion and civility to her guests had gained the good name her inn possessed, on which she piqued herself not a little, and it was her pride to continue a mode of conduct, by which she had not only acquired fame, but very considerable profit.

On opening the door, our fisherman had advanced toward her with an obeisance, which possibly the recollection of the stomachic tendency of her brandy, made somewhat lower than it would otherwise have been.

“Weel, honest Nicol,” said she, as her good-humoured eye glanced on the travellers beyond him, “whae have ye brought us here?”

“Sooth, mistress, that wad fickle me to tell,” replied Nicol; “but they are twa travellers I forgathered wi’ at the town end, as I was gaun doun to gi’e the boat a bit look for fear o’ this wind, and as they were speering for a public, I e’en brought them here, and seeing ye help me to live, it was but my duty ye ken.”

“ Thanks to ye, Nicol,” said our landlady ; “ tak an air of the fire this cauld night—And, Ciceel,” said she, calling to one of her women-servants, “ gie Nicol Partan a drap brandy-wine.” Then turning to the strangers, she said, “ Will ye be pleased to sit near the fire ?” and she drew toward it a large high-backed chair, for the accommodation of the female traveller, who sunk into it, apparently half dead with cold and fatigue.

“ Od save us !” said the fisherman, in an accent of astonishment, “ de’il the like o’ that ever I saw !—and the beast to sit sae canny a’ the time he was sae steiked up !”

• These exclamations were called forth, when, throwing from his left arm a small leathern case, somewhat resembling the portmanteau of modern days, the stranger unbuttoned his large cloak, and disencumbered his right hand, on which sat a white gyr-falcon, of extraordinary size and beauty. The bird shook her feathers, and raised her

wings, as if in joy of emancipation from confinement.

“ Poor bird !” said her master, “ thou, too, hast suffered from thy voyage, as well as thy companions !—but thou shalt have a perch whercon to peck and prune thyself, and thy supper to boot, before I take mine own.” And turning to his hostess, was about to request to be shewn to a sleeping-apartment, which he intended to share with his feathered friend, for whose comfort and safety he appeared particularly solicitous, when the light falling on the face of his fellow-traveller, discovered to him the wanness of her features, the extreme languor of her eyes, and the difficulty with which she appeared to breathe.

“ You are much indisposed indeed, my sister !” said he ; “ suffer our landlady to lead you immediately to a place of repose,—and,” continued he, addressing his hostess, who was employed in unfastening the cloak and hood of his companion, while she

was warmly recommending the vivifying effects of a sack-posset, "I beg my sister may have the best accommodation this house affords, for which you shall be cheerfully remunerated, nor shall you find me ungrateful for any attention you may have it in your power to bestow."

This request and assurance caused the Lady of Loretto to summon from their occupations two strapping wenches, who were employed in household affairs at the lower end of the apartment, and who, with the assistance of their mistress, speedily conveyed the person of the invalid to one of the gallery chambers, where having deposited her in bed, administered the before-mentioned sack-posset, and left her to that repose she so much required, our hostess descended to receive the commands of her other guest, not without some degree of curiosity concerning her newly-arrived inmates, just as our friend Nicol, who still lingered over the fire, in order to discover something more satisfactory than he had

yet been able to learn respecting those to whom he had acted as land-pilot, made an effort to extract information.

“Ye spake something anent being new come off a voyage, I think, sir,” said he, addressing the stranger; “I trow it couldna’ be in the bay ye landed, on sic a night as this?”

“It was, I suppose, in the bay,” replied the stranger, “for it was very near to this place. I considered it more advisable, in the present state of my sister’s health, to lodge her in a small quiet town like this, than amidst the bustle of trade at Leith, or within the confines of the city of Edinburgh, especially as our stay may be of some continuance.”

“And where come ye from,” said our landlady,—for, being extremely communicative of her own affairs, she had no idea of reserve in others.

The stranger answered this interrogatory with apparent readiness.—“We come,” said he, “from the Low Countries, where my sister was attendant on an honour-

able lady, now deceased, and where I have been engaged in business for some years; but, being natives of Scotland, and having wherewithal to return to our native country, and, moreover, being desirous of revisiting it, we took the opportunity of a vessel sailing from the Texel for Leith, and landing a few miles short of it, have, thanks to my good friend here, obtained what I foresee will prove a comfortable lodging.—But,” continued he, addressing himself to Nicol Partan, “it is time you should receive somewhat more satisfactory for your civility, than unprofitable acknowledgments.” He then drew from his pocket a piece of money, that from the way in which it was received, seemed amply to satisfy the expectations of his guide, who, having no longer the shadow of a pretext for remaining, departed, as he again informed them, to inspect the situation of his boat.

The stranger’s first care was now to provide a perch for his falcon, in the little matted chamber assigned him by his land-

lady, being one of those which entered from the ground-floor of the common apartment; and his next, to take from its roost one of his landlady's fowls, which having caused to be killed, he selected from it the proper morsels, and performed his promise of seeing the bird feed before himself; and then returned to the room he had left, to seek refreshment from such provisions as were set before him, which he now and then washed down with a cup of Rhenish.

He was a man apparently about forty-five years of age; yet five years might have been in reality subtracted, which were given to the lines of deep thought that marked a countenance somewhat severe, though frequently relieved from such expression, by a flexibility of features, capable of assuming, with surprising facility, the cast of countenance best suited to the purpose of the moment, and which a pair of uncommonly brilliant and penetrating dark eyes, made rather handsome than otherwise. The contour of his head was striking, and the bold

outline of his features seemed to proclaim him formed for enterprize. His person, though not tall, was above the middle size, and characterized by an active and vigorous appearance. During his meal, his hostess appearing suddenly to recollect herself, called one of the servants from a sort of scullery, attached to the room where she sat, and demanded of her if his reverence's fire was kindled.

“ You have then a clergyman an inmate here at present ?” remarked the stranger.

The Lady of Loretto's smile at this question betrayed much consciousness of superiority, as she drew herself up, so as in some measure to lengthen a neck which nature had made very short.

“ Nicol did not tell you then, that my gudeman is a minister ? In sooth, I thought he wad hae mentioned it.”

A slight expression of surprise crossed the countenance of her guest, and she continued, “ Ay, sure enough, he is of that holy calling, and chaplain to the corpora-

tion of fleshers in the City of Edinburgh; but, thank God!" she continued, with a look which savoured not of humility, "hé is nane o' them puir bodies wha hang upon the trade to whilk they administer in spiritual things for a bite and a soup. Na, na; far frae that, sir, as ye may see, having a gude house over his head, which belongs to himself,—that is, to *me*," said she, correcting herself; "for my first gudeman bought it frae the town, when they were about to ding it down, as they had done the rest o' the auld biggings; and when he died, he left a' thing to me, as in sooth was his duty,—nathless, ye ken he might hae done otherwise; but weel did he ken whatna bee it was that made the honey, for he never fashed wi' the concern, but liked better to sit and crack with the customers, though he was nae drinker neither, only just took part of what was going.—So ye see, sir, as I was saying, a' thing was left in my disposal—that is, failing my son; for we never had but ae bairn, and a

sair heart-break he was to his father and me baith, when he gaed off, and hired himself, unkend to us, to a young nobleman, wha was going into foreign parts, and was clean off the country afore we took suspicion ; and though he was unco wild and unsettled, yet we aye hoped he wad mend when he got mair sense."

" And have you never heard from him, or of him, since he left you ?" inquired the stranger.

" Yes, we heard tell o' him once, that he had left his master, the young Earl of Gowrie ; for when the Earl's brother, the Master o' Ruthven, returned, (for he came hame a while syne, and left the Earl abroad,) we speered at him concerning Laurence ; and we learned that his master kend naething about him, seeing he had left his service ; so it's likely," she continued, " that he is dead, or maybe, what is waur, turned a Papist, and a vagabond ; for it's six years, come next August, since he gaed out o' Scotland to the far-awa place, where the

Earl and the young Master were to get their learning ; and he would be five-and-twenty years auld at this time, an he were living ; for I was but a lassie when I married his father, honest Dugald Dalgleish ; but speaking about the puir ladie has ta'en me off my story.—Weel, when Dugald died, and I got nae word o' my bairn, and was like to get nane, I took sair on, as ye may judge, and then it was that I fell in wi' Maister Macsticket ; and the words that he spake were the first thing that gied me ony comfort ; so frae ae thing to another it gaed on, till what could I do better nor tak him, and gie him share o' what I cared little for my lane ? and, I dare believè, he's sensible enough o' his mercies, though ye ken, it mightna become him to be letting on about it, considering his holy calling, that makes it meet for him to stand afore the highest and the grandest in the land—but it's waesome to see the ministers of the trades that havena fallen sae weel in, gaun about just like a wheen beggars, wi' nac-

thing to subsist upon, but the daily dinner the trades are bound to gie them."

The person to whom she addressed herself was too intimately acquainted with the state of the Kirk of Scotland, since the period of the Reformation, to feel much surprise at this extraordinary history of the degradation of its ministers; for when the Romish clergy, at the Reformation, were despoiled of their rich benefices, and the Scottish nobility got possession of the church revenues, they seemed determined to prevent the reformed pastors from emulating the luxurious habits of their Popish brethren, by withholding from them what must have been considered a barely decent maintenance; and, in this state of poverty, many of them were obliged to have recourse to trade; nor was it an uncommon thing to find them keeping inns and taverns, and entering into the lowest employments, in order to support themselves and their families. These occupations were, however, soon prohibited by the kirk, and a more

respectable allowance made to the established clergy ; but there still remained a class of preachers, officiating as chaplains to the incorporations of trades in Edinburgh, who were poorly provided, their salaries being so trifling, that they were not supposed adequate to supply them with sustenance ; and the members of each corporation bound themselves “ to find the chaplain his meat, orderly, as he should come alternately about to them.”

Thus, there was nothing very surprising in the Rev. Mr Macsticket’s accepting the shelter of a good house, which he might call his own, though otherwise denominated an hostel ; nor was it strange, that having done so, and by no means disliking good eating, he should prefer partaking of the delicacies prepared for the guests at home, to the frugal and coarse fare commonly set before the men who were supplied with a dinner for God’s sake.

Our hostess had now mounted her hobby, and might have proceeded at full speed

without interruption, to set forth the additional consequence which her husband and herself derived from each other,—his arising from the advantage of sharing her riches—and hers from being raised to the rank of his reverence's wife,—had not the loud knocking of some one at the outward gate, whom she pronounced to be her husband, sent her, after some ineffectual calling, to shake up a boy who had fallen asleep on a bench in the back ground ; whom having dispatched to take his master's horse, (the said horse not being, by the by, one of the least indulgences acquired by a marriage with the relict of Dugald Dalglish,) she caught up an iron lamp, and shading its light with her hand, stood awaiting him with the door half open.

Our traveller felt a considerable degree of curiosity to see this priestly host, in whom such heterogeneous characters were combined, which was presently gratified by the appearance of a fair, portly-looking man, whose well-nurtured person might, without

disparagement, have vied with any mitred abbot of holy mother church. His figure was tall and inflexibly erect, which, by making the line of a somewhat long back curve inwards, added to the semicircle of the opposite protuberance. His naturally good-humoured features, long bound up in assumed formality, had unavoidably acquired an expression tinged with hypocrisy; which sinister appearance, however, was much owing to the prejudices of the times, which rendered it necessary in the eyes of the multitude, that the virtues their pastors so rigidly inculcated, should be personified, as it were, in their own persons; and a grave and solemn set of features thus became as necessary an appendage to a Presbyterian clergyman, as his Geneva cloak and band. Notwithstanding, however, the acquired solemnity of mine host's countenance, it was impossible to look long upon him, without the secret conviction, that nature had foreseen that he was one day to become master of an hostel, and that mere-

ly through some extraordinary mistake, an occupation so diametrically opposite had been assigned him. The truth was, that his father, an industrious butcher and zealous follower of John Knox, and the other popular preachers of his day, mistaking in his son, for inspiration, what was only the effect of a most tenacious memory, that ever had at command any passage of Scripture, bestowed on him as much learning as his circumscribed finances would admit, and thought himself amply repaid, when, in process of time, he had the supreme felicity of hearing him utter text after text, which he strung like beads on one another, like Sancho Panza's proverbs, for the edification of the worshipful corporation of fleshers. Yet, in the dawn of a new religion, when the Bible had been comparatively so short a time in the hands of the laity, and when, although in their possession, they were so illiterate as to be unable to read it, his faithful repetition of its sacred sentences was heard with eagerness and advantage.

Such, then, was Master Maesticket, who, on entering the house, seemed to be directing his course across the hall, towards a door on the opposite side, but, happening to turn his head in the direction of the blazing fire, and perceiving its vicinity unoccupied except by one person, he changed what had apparently been his first intention, and approached it. “Ay,” said his wife, as she took from his shoulders his riding-cloak, and shook from its folds the sleet which a tempestuous shower had lodged there, “I thought ye wad settle yoursel at this fire to-night, seeing we have so little company in the house, for there is only just this gentleman and his sister, who is sair done out, poor woman, and awa to bed a while syne, and——”

“Weel, weel,” replied her spouse, somewhat impatiently, “ye had more need, I trow, to set some vivers before me, than to let your tongue run sac glib; for though ye may weel suppose that I ha’na wanted my supper till ten hours at night, yet my jour-

ney maketh my stomach to crave somewhat to eat before going to rest. For I hold it a truly wise text of our Holy Scripture, sir," said he, addressing the stranger, "which saith, 'It is a good and comely thing that a man should eat and drink, and enjoy the fruit of all his labours that he taketh under the sun.'"

While he was thus employed in giving a scriptural reason for eating two suppers, his wife was preparing to set the second one before him. To which, after a long grace, he applied himself so earnestly, that one might have supposed, but for his own confession, that he had not seen provisions since morning. He spoke not again till, having finished his late meal, he desired his wife to produce some Malmsey, in praise of which he again addressed his guest, urging him strongly to partake of it; nor was it refused, for the traveller, wishing to draw him into conversation, readily accepted his invitation, and meantime requesting his hostess to look in upon his sister, he had

presently the satisfaction of learning that she was in a sound and comfortable sleep.

“ Ah !” said the Lady of Loretto, “ there is nothing like a weel-made sack-posset for comforting the stomach, and making ane sleep sound.” She was again proceeding to narrate, for the information of her husband, all she had been told by the stranger with regard to himself and his companion, when she was a second time checked into silence.

“ Weel, woman, weel, I’ll warrant our guest can tell his ain tale, sae ye may gang your ways to bed, and leave us to our soup wine and our ain cracks.”

Our hostess understood her duty too well to require a second bidding, or to utter a syllable more. As she disappeared, the stranger smiled, “ You keep good order in your house, I sec,” said he.

“ Ay,” replied his host, “ we put bits in the horses’ mouths that they may obey us, and we turn about their whole bodies ; and in like manner must the women be

guided, or how shall the Scripture be fulfilled, ‘Women, submit yourselves to your husbands;’ ‘for the tongue is an unruly member.’ ‘And as the climbing of a sandy way to the feet of the aged, so is a wife full of words to a quiet man.’ Therefore, sir, I make it a rule that I shall have peace in mine own house; and you see I am middling well obeyed;—but, sooth to speak, she is not an ill woman, and noway given to brangle, but, like all her sex, somewhat fond of prating.—And now, what think you of the Malmsey?”

The stranger gave all due commendation to the wine, which was really excellent.

“Ay,” continued his host, with a relishing smack of his lips as he set down the cup, “ye will not find better in Scotland; but our King, God bless him, hath thought it convenient to lay a tax of twal pence the pint upon all our wines at this present; and I have ordered the gudewife not to resist payment, as some fools have done, and gotten themselves put to the horn for their trouble.

Nathless, the like o' this impost was never heard tell of before ; but it serves nothing to resist authority, and we must ' render unto Cæsar the things that be Cæsar's ; tribute to whom tribute is due ; ' for I make it a rule aye to obey the proclamations in all temporal things, that I may set a good example, as it is meet I should do, considering my calling ; but," continued he, " I am supposing ye ken, sir, of my holy office ?"

Being satisfied on this important point, he replied, with a chuckle of self-complacency,—“ Ou ay ! the gudewife never leaves ony body long ignorant of that, who comes to this house.—But, by the by,” said he, “ she did not tell me your name, or, if she did, it hath slipped my memory ?”

“ I believe she did not,” said the stranger, “ for I do not recollect mentioning it to her ;—my name is Francis Austin.”

He then proceeded to give the same account of himself and his female companion, which he had before related to his hostess, with this addition, that having become pos-

sessed of a falcon, whose peculiar kind, rare beauty, and excellent training, made her an acquisition not to be undervalued by a prince; and hearing that the sovereign of his native country was passionately fond of hawking, he had determined that she should become his property.

“And what method do ye purpose taking to present her to his Majesty?” demanded his host, with a look of sly intelligence.

“I have still that to think of,” replied Austin, “although I do not apprehend any great difficulty; for I have always seen a change of property pretty easily effected, where one man is anxious to possess what another is desirous he should have, whatever may be the difference in the rank of the individuals. My best plan will, I believe, be, to apply to some one who can mention the circumstance to his Majesty; or, if I cannot find such a person, his Majesty hath a sharp eye for a good bird, and I have but to place myself somewhere in his

view, with my hawk upon my fist, and he will be sure to notice her."

"No need, no need," said his host, speaking eagerly; "for, now mark me, Master Austin, there is somewhat extraordinary in this, that you should be led blindfold, as your ain bird when she's hooded, to the very person who can serve you in this matter,—for I am that man,—and I'll tak ye to-morrow, an ye like, to one of the King's falconers—ay, and to him that his Majesty hath more conceit of than any of them all, and one that, as the bruit goes, can gang further ben whiles than some of the nobles; for his Majesty is, as a man may say, a sylvan prince, and loves his hawks and his hounds better than any thing,—except, I trow, the Kirk o' Scotland."

The latter sentence of this speech was delivered with a sort of leer at the stranger, implying a covert meaning, which he was at no loss to translate, but of which he took no notice; and he went on—"Now, ye see,

Heronshaw the falconer is something of a friend to the gudewife by her first husband, and has always been gay ceevil to me since I married the widow, though he is but a thrawn sort o' earle ;—ne'er mind, he loves a good hawk, and, I'll be caution, will be fain to get haud of yours ; and, as I was saying, an ye have no objection, we'll wend our way to the Palace of Holyrood to-morrow,—but ye'll no tak the hawk till ye see what he says, for I dinna just like to travel in company with her, seeing it's not seemly for one of my calling to fash his head with wood-craft."

It was therefore agreed that the falcon should be left in the hostel until the stranger should be introduced to the falconer ; and they separated for the night.

CHAPTER III.

If you will work upon any man, you must know his nature, and so lead him ; or his weaknesses and disadvantages, and so awe him.

BACON.

EARLY next morning our traveller sought the apartment of his female companion, whom he found considerably restored by the repose she had enjoyed, and the virtues of her landlady's sack-posset. He informed her of what had passed between his host and himself on the preceding night, and that, in consequence of his offer to introduce him to the kinsman of his wife, he should that morning accompany him to Holyrood.—“ And from the moment,” said he, lowering his voice, and bending his head towards the bed, “ I get a footing there, you may anti-

cipate a favourable result to your undertaking."

"May the Holy Virgin speedily grant thee success," replied she, in the same undertone, "that I may be enabled to depart from this accursed country, the cry of whose offences is even now ascending up unto Heaven!—But when dost thou purpose to seek Father Leonard?—methinks that holy man's prayers and counsel will avail us much."

"Immediately," returned he; "as soon as I can find an opportunity of shaking off my host, who is to be my companion to the city, I shall proceed to search for the father, according to the direction I have obtained."

"Go then, my brother," she replied, "and may the blessing of the faithful, and of the outraged Church, go with thee!—I shall keep mine apartment, on the plea of indisposition, till it is expedient for me to leave it, avoiding, as much as possible, all intercourse with these impious heretics."

The traveller now descended to the com-

mon hall, where having partaken of the morning repast, and done ample justice to the cheer set before him, in which he was ably assisted by his reverend host, they set forward together to prosecute their journey toward Edinburgh, which, as they were both on foot, and his reverence's pedestrian powers being none of the most active, occupied a considerable portion of the morning, and it was not till about two hours before noon, that they arrived at the Palace of Holyrood, where, keeping to the south side of the building, they made their way into a small court, surrounded by dog-kennels and hawk-mews. Before one of the latter stood two men, with their backs to our traveller and his guide,—they were apparently in high dispute, for they were both talking loudly, and at the same time.

“ I'll be curst, then,” said the man who, by his figure and grey hairs, seemed the elder, “ if that sacre I was sent all the way to St Ebba's to fetch is worth a bodle!—I would mak mair of a gleid, an I had the

reclaiming of him,—the deevil himsel canna cure her o' raking out.—But if we dinna get other guess-trainers to the hawks, his Majesty's sport will dwine, I'll tell ye that ; for I am waxing up in years, and canna do what I have done ; and, what's mair, I canna keep a' right here and at Falkland baith ; and while I've been there, this falcon hath gane to ruin, becautse an idle varlet like you canna be fash'd to mind her as she should be minded !—But the de'il be my speed if I dinna seek some better help soon !”

At this threat the younger man turned sullenly away, muttering somewhat, in which cankered earles, and conceited old fools, who thought nobody so wise as themselves, had their share of commendation. This abuse, however, was lost upon the old man, who, in endeavouring to hear what he was saying, turned round, and perceived his clerical friend and the stranger he had come to introduce, the former of whom, laying his hand on the old falconer's shoulder, thus commenced his attack in favour

of his companion, having just arrived, as he thought, in the nick of time :—

“ Thou art complaining of bad falconers and careless tenders, as I apprehend, mine old friend,” said he ; “ now, what shall be my guerdon, if I tell thee of a falcon, the like of which ye never saw ?”

“ Ha, ha !—and where, I pray you, perches the bird sic as I never saw ?—and who is he that tells me so ?” said he, eyeing the boaster from head to foot, with a settled look of contempt ;—“ a proper judge, I ween, of the properties of a hawk ! Na, na ! ye needna think to fool him that gait, that’s seen the King o’ Denmark’s mews, and the wale o’ Norway hawks. Bût, an ye like, Maister Maesticket, where is this *rara avis*, as his Majesty wad ca’ it ?”

“ Why, that,” said his kinsman, “ I came here to tell ye.—This honest man whom thou beholdest is her owner, and the bird herself is now in my house at Musselburgh, where thou mayest see her.”

“ Hooly, hooly, good neighbour !” said

the old man, in a moody tone; “ can the man no bring her here?—for, truly, I have travel enough, without going yont to Musselburgh, and, mayhap, on a gowk’s errand, after all, an he have nae mair skeel o’ a hawk than ye hac. I canna forget your speaking to me in that fashion anent what ye ken naething about—me, that gaed all the way to Denmark wi’ the King, when we brought hame the Queen, and saw the wale o’ hawks, frae the eagle to the merlin.”

“ Nay,” said his reverence, becoming somewhat offended in his turn, “ I indeed know little of hawks, and care less; it would ill-become me to be fashing my head with hawks and hounds, dogs and horses, and sielike vanities; but I thought to do you a pleasure by bringing to you this honest man, who seems to understand the craft as well as yourself; but if ye dinna want the bird, why, nae mair about it—there’s nae ill in all that’s come and gane yet.”

The stranger, who began to feel alarmed

priated to the attendants on horse, hound, and hawk.

“ Now ye maun turn to the right, and enter the first door ye find, and tarry ye there till I come.”

So saying, he took his way through a different avenue, and they, following his directions, found themselves in a comfortable small room, garnished in sundry parts with the emblems of the owner's office,—jesses, bewits, leashes, and hoods, hanging from nails driven into the walls, adorned the *sanctum sanctorum* of his Majesty's falconer. They had remained in this apartment nearly half an hour, when the stranger, observing a hawk's hood of a peculiar construction, took it from the hook on which it was suspended, and partly from curiosity, partly from a wish to avoid any further conversation with his conductor, continued to examine it, until the return of the falconer.

“ Weel,” said the old man, as he returned, “ I have seen his Majesty, and he will

be pleased to look upon that same bird of yours at eight hours to-morrow morning ; but I rede ye tak tent that she comes up to your report, or mak us quit o' you, while you're in a hale skin, for the King's patience gangs into sma' bouk when he's disappointed ; and ye see he's unco keen about her, because she's white, and we never had a clean white ane before, nor indeed, for that matter, was there a single white ane in the King o' Denmark's mews when I was awa' wi' his Majesty ; so, an she be but as weel trained as ye say, there's little doubt o' employment for her and you baith."

The stranger, during this speech of Heronshaw's, felt the most unbounded joy, of which he, however, allowed no more to pass into his countenance than what beseeemed the occasion.—He still held the hood in his hand, which the old man perceiving,—

" See ye any thing strange," said he, " about that hood, that ye examine it sae narrowly ?"

" Certainly," replied the stranger, " I

see a great improvement on the common fashion ;” at the same time, he pointed out what he deemed its advantages, and praised the ingenuity of the contrivance. This appeared highly to delight the old falconer, for, turning to his kinsman,—

“ See what it is now,” said he, “ to have been abroad, and to have seen something o’ guid sport, and to ken somewhat o’ the training o’ hawks ; I could never mak the gomerils here, understand the beauty o’ the alteration I made in the running o’ thae strings.”

“ And now,” said mine host, “ that ye seem to have gotten over that contrarious humour o’ thine, I wish, if it be convenient, ye would give me a draught of somewhat to slake my thirst ; for, with all due reverence to the holy text be it spoken, ‘ I pant even as the hart for the water brooks ;’ yet,” continued he, “ ye need not tak me entirely in the literal sense, for, although water be a wholesome beverage, and a most useful liquid, seeing it formeth a component

part of many excellent liquors ; yet I apprehend, that in this cold weather, and especially after a long walk, that wherein there is more strength tendeth more to the comforting of the stomach."

" Say no more, man, say no more," said Heronshaw ; " when heard ye o' an auld falconer's drinking the pure element, or recommending it to his friends ?—and sure the guid stark wine is not so scarce wi' his Majesty's kuaves, that we need be grudging a soup o' it to our cummers.—But, to say sooth, I have scarce gotten ower the brangle I had wi' that careless lout **ye found me** wi'—a murrain take him ! **But** sit ye down, and ye shall neither want guid meat nor guid drink to synd it down withal."

Being about the customary hour of dinner-time with his guests, they made no objection to partake of that meal with him ; which, having discussed, and being about to take their leave of the old man, he again charged the stranger to be punctual in his

attendance on the following morning—an admonition there was small chance of his disregarding.

On leaving the palace, the stranger expressed a wish to visit the city, and was conducted through the principal streets by Macsticket, in passing along which, he occasionally remarked to his companion the changes which had taken place during the years he had been abroad, (not having seen it for seventeen years, when he had paid it a visit,) and proposed ascending the Castle-Hill, that he might become better acquainted with its extension ; his companion, however, strongly objected to this additional fatigue in his own person, and promised to wait for him till he should have satisfied his curiosity, at the house of an acquaintance, who lived in the suburbs of the town, on the road to Musselburgh, and where he gave him a direction to find him. This refusal of his host to accompany him in his extended walk had been foreseen by the

stranger, from sundry puffings and blowings, joined to heavy complaints of the toilsome distance between Musselburgh and the city; the proposal of ascending the hill, therefore, suggested itself to him as a probable means of leaving him at liberty to prosecute his search for the person mentioned by his female companion in the beginning of this chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

No holy priest in the temple stands,
No incense from the altars rise ;
For the church hath lost her good broad lands,
And the holy priest in exile dies.

Old Ballad.

THE stranger, availing himself instantly of his separation from his companion, turned with a swift step to seek the wynd, to which the direction he had received led him ; and, after some search, dived into its dark and narrow confines, where, on inquiring for William Fleming, he was asked by a little ragged boy, if it was the gaberlunzie man he speered after, and on answering in the affirmative, was conducted up a wretched stair, where, upon knocking at a door, it was presently opened by an aged man,

whose tall and somewhat bending figure was wrapped in a tunic of coarse grey cloth, garnished in many places with patches, which in colour appeared to match but indifferently with the threadbare garment. His white hairs were nearly concealed by a blue bonnet, of the shape still worn by many old men in Scotland. His face was pale, and on each feature were marked alike the traces of sorrow and resignation; his eyes alone appeared untouched by the leaden hand of time, as if in reverence of the divinity which seemed reflected through them. He was about to inquire the business of his visitor, when the latter abruptly entering, shut the door, and secured it with its wooden bolt. The old man, stepping a few paces back, exclaimed, "Explain what thou meanest, stranger, by this sudden intrusion?"

"I cannot be mistaken," said Austin, looking earnestly at him; "for though we have never before met, you are well known to many with whom I have associated, and I

may venture to affirm, that it is with Father Leonard that I now hold communion."

"And who hath informed ye that I am other than I seem?" returned the old man; "and were that the case, what would ye with one, over whom now hangs the sentence of the law, and with whom it were dangerous to consort?"

"Fear not, father," said the stranger, "no betrayer of the true faith now addresses you, but a zealous member of the Society of Jesus, who is charged by our General to deliver this packet to you, with his spiritual benediction, and hearty commendation."

So saying, he took a paper from the breast of his doublet, and presented it to Father Leonard, which the father having opened and looked on, exclaimed, "It is the signature of the holy Vicegerent of God himself, which I hold in my hand!" And having devoutly crossed himself, he proceeded to read the scroll, being a brief or circular letter, signed by his Holiness the Pope, commanding all true Catholics to aid and as-

sist the bearer, Father Patullo, *alias* Francis Austin, to the best of their abilities, in whatever manner he might require, for the advancement and establishment of the Catholic faith, under pain of excommunication. The old man folded and returned the paper again to the Jesuit.

“And what, brother, is required of me by holy mother church? Would to God!” said he, clasping his withered hands, and looking upward with the saint-like expression of a martyr,—“Would to God that the shedding of the blood which now creeps heavily along these veins, could avail for her advancement! but, alas! what can a wretched feeble being like me accomplish?”

“Much, holy father,” replied the Jesuit, “much may be expected from your prayers, your advice, and your performance in secret of the holy rites of our religion; and it is in these alone I shall require your assistance.”

“And behold by these tokens,” said the old man, directing the attention of the Je-

suit, (for so we shall now call him,) to his garments, and the wretched apartment, “that I have not shrunk from these important duties in a deluded land; and I bless God, that my feeble services have comforted many, and that many have, at my hands, received that sacred rite, by which their souls have passed, purged from the dross of this world, to the joys of a better; for there is still a remnant of the faithful remaining in this erring city, to whose houses I gain admittance, under the pretext of receiving alms, and thus have I now lived for upwards of thirty years without discovery, and am content to live, for the short space which may be yet allotted me,—no longer, indeed, respected by the people, and the confessor of Queens,—no longer administering the holy sacraments under the sainted roof of St Anthony, but a poor, proscribed, despised, and solitary old man; yet in this, richer and happier than King James upon his throne,—that I have not,

like him, forsaken and trampled upon the religion in which I was baptised."

"Yet," said the Jesuit, "there are many who think better times await us here, and that the King is at heart no heretic."

"Ah! believe it not, my son," returned Father Leonard; "the Catholics will never be the better of James, unless they are first favoured by some other cause; he may then indeed profess again the faith from which he hath departed; for his weak nature is ever led by those who surround him, and he was born to be moulded by circumstance: but tell me not that there is faith or manhood in him, who saw his injured mother fall beneath the axe of that perfidious woman, Elizabeth of England, and struck not one blow to save or to avenge her." A faint glow of indignation passed over his pallid cheek, and he continued,—“ Degenerated, indeed, is he from the noble spirit of his sainted mother, who thus can truckle to her murderer.”

"But, father," said the Jesuit, "you

surely forget that open violence could never have succeeded against a power so superior as that of England, and that, by a rupture with its Queen, he would probably have lost all chance of succeeding her."

"True," said the father, with a smile of contempt, "these are worldly reasons; but when, I pray you, tarried a noble heart to weigh the niceties of loss and gain, when outraged and insulted in the sacred person of a parent? But, in forsaking the holy faith of his ancestors, all nobleness and valour have forsaken him; yet, God forgive me!" said he, bowing his head with lowly humility, "it is unto thee, Omnipotent Father, that vengeance belongeth, and thou wilt repay it.—But thou hast not yet unfolded to me, my son, the way in which thou dost purpose to extend my usefulness; speak then, for thou shalt find me willing, even to the death."

"It shall be told thee," said the Jesuit, "in a few words.—Thou mayest perhaps remember two daughters of the Lord Osborne,

at the court of thy last royal mistress, the elder of whom became professed in the Convent of the Ursulines at Rome, of which house she is now Superior ; and the younger married the heretical Lord Somerdale, and is lately dead, but who has left an only daughter, of whom I would speak."

" She is, indeed, dead," said the father, " and left, as thou sayest, a daughter. I myself administered the last consolations of religion to the lady Somerdale, as I be-
think me, some fourteen months gone by ; much had she suffered, as the meet recompense of her error, in choosing for her husband one excluded from the pale of our church. But her repentance was sincere, and her faith unwavering ; nor was she destitute of the means of bestowing on the church such gifts as are acceptable to God, and available for the pardon of that frailty which ever cleaveth to mortality, for her economy had saved a considerable sum, which I transmitted to the Ursulines at

Rome, to be expended in masses for her soul."

"But," said the Jesuit, "you have not yet spoken of her daughter—Doth she still adhere to her mother's faith?"

"She did," returned the father, "at the time of her mother's death, and had it not been for her, the soul of the lady had passed in peace; but great was the anguish which she sustained as the time of her departure approached, when she reflected on the temptations to which her daughter might be subjected in an evil land, where all have departed from the way of salvation; and earnestly did she entreat her husband that her child might be permitted to seek the protection of her aunt at Rome, but he was inexorable; and at his own death, (for he too is now in eternity,) he left his brother guardian of his daughter and her fortune; who, being on the eve of his departure for a foreign country, to prevent her fulfilling the wishes of her mother, procured

her to wait upon the Queen, as one of her gentlewomen ; and much I tremble for the poor young creature in her office of peril, where it is impossible for me to approach, to strengthen her faith, or warn her of her danger ; yet, of all the maidens these old eyes have ever yet beheld, she hath the firmest mind ; for, doating on her mother almost to idolatry, she beheld her long protracted pangs without one tear or gesture to increase their bitterness ; and when the soul had fled its earthly mansion, it was indeed a sight of awe to behold so young a maiden take upon herself the last sad offices survivors render to humanity, that no unhal- lowed, and no meaner hand might touch the honoured relics. Ah ! woe to them who would withdraw her from the arms of holy church, to cast her into those of Satan !”

“ This shall be cared for, father,” said the Jesuit, “ and she shall yet escape as a prey from the fowler ; for, be it known to you, that her aunt, having obtained permission from his Holiness to leave her convent, for the purpose of snatching this child

of her sister from the fangs of the heretics, arrived with me in Scotland but yesterday, and now awaits the course of events at Musselburgh." He then proceeded to inform Father Leonard of the scheme he had formed for gaining admittance to the palace, and concluded by saying, that should she, for whom the church had shewn so much anxiety, prove refractory, his aid, as her mother's confessor, was likely to avail much.

"And now, peace be with thee, holy father," said the Jesuit; "thou shalt have timely notice in what thou canst aid us; but I must now hasten to rejoin my conductor, whom I have kept awaiting me."

"Farewell, my son," said the old man; "thou shalt find me ready whenever I am called upon."

As the Jesuit's steps mechanically led him to join his companion at the appointed place, his mind was deeply absorbed in contemplating plans for the destruction of others, and his own advancement.

"Yes," said he, "the proud dream of

power, that hath grown with my growth, and strengthened with my strength, shall yet be realized, or this world holds no other good for me ; for it is not the mean fear of sleeping the long sleep of eternity, that shall prevent my ascending that arduous and lofty eminence, whereon is placed the goal of my desires, and where, once arrived, the fame of the warlike Ignatius, and his more politic successor, shall fade before mine as the stars before the morning sun ;—then shall our monarchy become perfected, and every other be subjected to it, and all who have hitherto opposed our sway be made to tremble.”

But, leaving the Jesuit to the workings of his ambition, we shall take this opportunity of unfolding to the reader his history and his views.

Oliver Patullo was a native of Scotland, and the twin son of a creature of Cardinal Beaton's, whom that ambitious churchman had sent on a secret mission to Rome, where he carried with him the person whose his-

tory we are relating, then a child,—leaving in Scotland his other son, who became afterwards chamberlain to Esmé Stuart, Duke of Lennox, and accompanied him in his journey to France, whither he was banished by the faction concerned in the Raid of Ruthven. Meanwhile, Oliver, whom his father left abroad on his own return to Scotland, was, according to his wish, educated in a college of the Jesuits; where, soon becoming conspicuous for depth of genius, aptness for intrigue, extraordinary courage of mind, and strength of body, his talents were fostered with the greatest care. Nor was this care unrequited in the manner anticipated from the promise of his early years; for, on being admitted a professor in the Society, wherever a deep and dangerous service was to be performed, there was he employed, and seldom did his enterprizes fail of success. Already, at the command of his General, had he traversed, on various missions, the whole of the continent of Europe, and, assuming as many characters as he had

objects to achieve, he had become familiar with the counsels of Princes, and the intrigues of courts, and accomplished more for the benefit of Rome, than perhaps any other individual in similar circumstances. For promoting the aggrandizement of his order, his zeal was unwearied; and he had the gratification of beholding himself esteemed the most active and intrepid member of the Society, and of obtaining the highest rank, next to the General's, permitted in the order.—But his ambition took still a loftier flight. Accustomed from early youth to bend every faculty of his mind to the consideration of the interests and exaltation of the fraternity, he had become so intimately acquainted with its government and views, that his bold and penetrating genius discovered every flaw in its organization, and had formed, on this knowledge of its imperfections, such plans for strengthening and extending its influence, that the idea of directing the whole machine, by one day becoming its head, had never ceased to oc-

cupy his imagination. But, in order to achieve this object so earnestly desired, it was necessary that he should become still more conspicuous as the champion of Catholicism ; for he had been assured by his General, that could he accomplish the overthrow of the reformed religion in Scotland, he would himself point him out as his successor, in the event of his surviving him ; and the Pope had promised to reward his endeavours in this cause, with honours and riches, such as were only bestowed on the most favoured sons of the church. The spirit of Patullo, rising with the occasion, presented to his imagination the brilliant prospects of the future, as viewed by ambition, and sketched by the hand of the master-fiend.

The issue of his sinister schemes, and the means he took to ensure their success, remain to be narrated. Meanwhile, we shall leave him to rejoin his clerical companion, and to accompany him back to Musselburgh.

CHAPTER V.

Now match me this horse, cry'd the King in his glee,
Or shew me a tyke of this stag-hound's degree ;
And still, if the horse and the hound ye shou'd ding,
Here's a falcon, whose marrow ye ne're could bring.

Old Ballad.

A FEW minutes before the time appointed by Heronshaw, on the following morning, the Jesuit made his appearance with his hawk, at the door of the old falconer's little chamber at Holyrood.

“ Right—I see ye are punctual,” said the old man, with a smile of approbation on his withered countenance, which gradually expanded into a grin of satisfaction, as he examined the bird. “ A bonnie falcon is she, in sooth,” said he ; “ and if she belies not her looks, ye may keep yoursel cosy for

the rest o' your days, or I'm no true prophet; but come away, his Majesty is walking in the Park, as is his ordinair at this hour, when he's no at the hunting; and we mustna bide here another minute, for he will be wearying, I'se warrant him."

The Jesuit accompanied him through several courts, till at length they entered the eastermost one, which was bounded on the north by the Chapel-Royal; from whence they passed by a private door, into that part of the Park, then covered with majestic trees, which forms a narrow plain between the Palace and the foot of the hill called Salisbury Craigs.

They had proceeded but a short way from the Palace, when Heronshaw pointed out between the boles of the trees, his Majesty, advancing at some distance, accompanied by an attendant on whom he leaned.

"Bide ye here a minute," said the old man, "and dinna be ower sair daunted at the presence o' the King, for ye carry that upon your neive would gang near to mak

ye welcome, were ye the de'il himsel, or the Lord Bothwell, that he likes muckle waur ; but watch ye me, and when I gie ye a waive, come on ; but dinna forget to tak off your bonnet, and mak a low reverence."

So saying, he went forward, and the Jesuit saw him place himself within a few paces of his Majesty, on the side of the path-way in which the King was walking, who, on coming up, stopped for an instant, and spoke to him, and as he passed on, the old man fell into the rear, and made the appointed signal for the Jesuit to advance, which he accordingly obeyed, and doffing his bonnet, bent one knee to the ground, while he supported the hand on which the bird sat with the other. As he remained in this position for a few seconds, till the King came up, he was forcibly struck with the singular contrast presented by the persons of his Majesty and his attendant. James was of middle stature, and not ill proportioned, but appeared short, broad, and awkward, from the superabun-

dant fulness and many plaitings of his clothes, which were evidently stuffed to resist any weapon aimed against his person. There was also a striking inclegance in all his movements, and a shambling appearance in his gait, occasioned by the weakness of his legs, which, in walking, were ever thrown out to the sides, beyond the perpendicular of his body, forming, as it were, a semi-circular step ; owing to this infirmity, he seldom walked far, and still more seldom without a supporter. His features, though not irregular, were by no means pleasing, principally from a cast of cunning in their expression, and from the constant movement of his large eyes, that seemed ever rolling about in quest of some new face, which, when found, they fastened upon with a stare so unrelenting, that few people felt at ease under their gaze.

The young man by whom his Majesty was attended, appeared scarcely to have attained his twentieth year ; his figure was tall, and of perfect symmetry ; he was

clothed in a dress of green velvet, richly laced, which was fitted so well to his shape, that it exhibited, in a remarkable degree, the flexible graces of youth. His face was handsome, and animated by a wild and mirthful recklessness, in the expression of his clear dark eyes and arched brows; which appearance of careless gaiety was further strengthened by the negligent air with which he wore his hat and feather, and the manner in which his short fur cloak was flung back from his left shoulder, to give place to his Majesty's hand, that rested on it.

"Rise, man," said the King, "and place the bird mair upon a level with us.—Ha! Ruthven," he continued, addressing his young attendant, while every line of his countenance was marked with the most rapturous delight, "this is indeed a bonnie gyr-falcon—how purely white she is—no ae tinged feather! what length o' body! and what strong talons—how open, and how lang they are! I'll warrant her a noble

striker.—Where cam she from ?” said the King, eagerly, to the Jesuit ; “ and what price set ye on her ?”

“ She is yours, if it so pleases you, my Liege, without price,” said the Jesuit with a bend of humility, and waiving the first question ; “ but I crave of your Majesty, if such is your pleasure, that I may be allowed to attend her.”

“ What !” returned the King, in an accent of astonishment ; “ doth a loon like thee—for thy dress and request bespeak thee of the lower rank in life—mak us a present which it might bescem ae prince to mak to anither, and ask nae higher boon than that whilk thou hast named !—This is maist extraordinary,” continued the King. “ Bethink thee, man, of what thou sayest ; and inform us from whence thou hadst this scarce and noble bird ?”

“ If your Majesty will graciously allow me to speak without witnesses,” replied the Jesuit, “ I may be emboldened by your Majesty’s permission, to crave of your in-

dulgence yet another favour, and will make answer to all your Majesty's questions."

"Is it your Majesty's pleasure that I should walk aside?" said the young gentleman who attended the King.

"Not so," said James; "let him follow us, and we will presently hear what he hath to say."

Accordingly, as soon as they reached the Palace, he ordered the Jesuit to be brought to his presence; directing, at the same time, some of his attendants to remain in the anti-chamber, near the door of his apartment.

"Weel," said his Majesty, as soon as he appeared, "now, speak freely, man, and mak known your request."

The Jesuit advanced toward the upper end of the apartment, and approached closer than his Majesty apparently deemed safe, for it caused him to make a retrograde motion, accompanied by a very perceptible degree of alarm, which, however, instantly subsided, when the Jesuit, kneeling before

him, thus addressed him, in a low and sup-
plicating voice :—" I most humbly crave
your Majesty's pardon," said he, " should
I, in performing the last command of a
dear and honoured master, trespass upon
your clemency ; and considering the length
of time that hath elapsed since his lament-
ed decease, it may probably surprise your
Majesty, when I inform you, that the fal-
con you have just seen, must be considered
by your Majesty as the gift of the noble
Esmé Stuart, Duke of Lennox."

" How !" said James, extending his eyes,
and exhibiting every mark of the most per-
plexed amazement. " How ! Esmé Stuart ?
Why, man, thou art certes beside thyself ;
ken ye not that seventeen years have pass-
ed since the Duke died in a foreign land ?
What strange story is this ? and for what
purpose dost thou relate sic improbabili-
ties ?"

" If your Majesty will be pleased to hear
me, I will explain what I am sensible must
indeed appear improbable," said the Jesuit,

as he drew a few steps nearer to the King, who, on this movement, exclaimed,—

“ Stand back, man, or I will presently have thee punished for sic familiar boldness.”

The Jesuit immediately moved from the place he occupied ; and with a look of the humblest contrition for his offence, placed himself on the opposite side of the table which stood near the King, and resumed his story.

“ To that foreign land where the Duke was banished, may it please your Majesty, I followed him ; and, as his favourite and confidential servant, witnessed the pangs of separation from your Majesty, which broke his noble heart. In his dying hours, he pondered on some memorial which might best recall him to your Majesty’s remembrance ; and giving me a purse of gold, made me take a solemn oath to search out and train for your Majesty’s use, a falcon, of the kind most rare and esteemed ; which having done, I was myself to present to

your Majesty, as the last offering of his devoted heart to his benefactor, friend, and prince."

The Jesuit paused as he finished the last sentence, and ventured to cast a glance on the face of the King, on whom his concluding words seemed to have acted like a charm. For as his earliest and best-beloved friend was thus forcibly brought back to his recollection, every feature relaxed, and his countenance underwent many changes. There appeared to him something almost supernatural in a message and gift thus delivered from a being long since crumbled into dust, whose soul had once been knit to his; and as the memory of past years returned, the very voice of the dead seemed sounding in his ears; all else was for the time forgotten: and two large natural drops gushed from his eyes, and rolled down his cheeks; but recovering himself with a sudden effort, he demanded of the Jesuit, what had caused the extraordinary delay of so many years in the fulfilment of

his mission ; and if he had aught to produce in attestation of the truth of his story.

The Jesuit was not unprepared for these questions ; and perceiving, with exultation, that the effects of his fabricated tale had fallen nothing short of his expectations, he proceeded with more confidence, and that undaunted brow which seemed to bear the stamp of truth.

“ So please your Majesty to hearken to my lowly history, since the period of my noble master's death,” he said, “ and you will be satisfied, that in this delay, no blame can be attached to me.”

“ Speak on, man,” said the King ; “ and that quickly.”

Having obtained this permission, he proceeded.—“ As soon as the last obsequies were rendered to the lamented remains of my honoured master, eager to accomplish his wish, I left France with an intention of passing through Germany ; but when

there, the anxiety and watching I had experienced before my master's death, joined to the fatigue of my journey, threw me into a fever, which terminated in a disease of the brain, under which I laboured for many months, during which time the place of my residence had been frequently changed; and when at length I was restored to reason, I discovered that I had lost, together with nearly all that was my own, the contents of that purse, which was to have enabled me to perform a promise, the most binding I could conceive, as made to a dying benefactor. I shall not presume to trouble your Majesty with a recital of my ineffectual efforts to recover the gold; but shall now put into your hands the purse that contained it, and which the carelessness of those by whom I had been plundered, had caused them to leave among my raiment. I have heard my master say it was once your Majesty's, and it is too remarkable, I think, not to be recognized."

As he said this, he drew the purse from his bosom and delivered it to the King, who now allowed his approach without any symptom of fear. It was composed of scarlet taffety, richly embroidered with gold; on one side were the letters M. R., surmounted by a crown, and joined to the initials H. D.; and on the other, two hearts, with the motto, "L'Amour nous unis." It was the work of the unfortunate Mary, and had been her gift, in the first days of love, to the no less unfortunate Darnley. The King immediately recollected the purse, and also his having bestowed it as a mark of affection on his favourite.

"It is sufficient," said the King; "finish your story, man, but be brief."

"After my loss," continued the narrator, "it was vain for me to prosecute my journey in the hope of procuring a falcon of that valuable kind, which could alone be a gift worthy of my noble master, or acceptable to your Majesty. I therefore entered into the service of another master, whose

liberality, after ten years, enabled me to join myself with a Jew-merchant, who was travelling to the Low Countries, where I was at length enabled to realize what I deemed sufficient for my purpose, when I immediately made a journey to the northernmost extremity of Norway, and was so fortunate as to meet with the bird your Majesty hath now seen, and which I have spared no pains in training both for the river and the field. And now, might your Majesty's humble vassal crave a boon, it would be, that it may remain unknown whom I have served, or that the falcon was a bequest of my late master, seeing that, while abroad, I consorted for some space with a man deeply skilled in sundry of the high sciences, who, by his art in palmistry, foretold that, should I again venture to visit the capital of Scotland, it was ordained that I should run a bloody risk from the descendants of those enemies of my master who caused his banishment. This prediction, though at first it made an impression

on my mind, had since well nigh escaped my recollection, till it was recalled to my remembrance within this hour, when your Majesty, in speaking to your attendant in the park, pronounced the name of one of the family of my noble master's most inveterate foes."

"Tush, man," said the King, "what wad it advantage the descendants of the Lord Gowrie to harm thee, that they should fash themselves about a carle o' thy degree; thou shalt have no cause, however, for thy foolish fears, for it is my pleasure that the name o' the late Duke be not allowed to pass thy lips; it is of power to conjure up that whilk hath long slept within mine own bosom, and might have some effect on others." A gloomy expression overspread the brow of the King; and he continued to mutter to himself, as if unconscious of being overheard:—"The sight o' that bird is dangerous; it will owër forcibly recal the fate of him I loved entirely—of him whose marrow I shall ne'er see again; yet it was his

last request, and it were in sooth a pity to lose sic a bird : I maun keep the hawk at all events.—Here,” said his Majesty, again speaking to the Jesuit, and taking from an escritoir a bag containing fifty rose-nobles ; for his admiration of the bird, and the effect of the story so recently told by the Jesuit, had occasioned one of those lavish fits, to which he was subject through life, though he seldom failed to repent having committed such acts of generosity—“ Here is gold, man, to mark our approbation of your fidelity—be as faithful to your Sovereign as ye have been to the Duke, and ye will secure our favour. Ye appear,” he added, “ to be a sensible man, and your bearing seemeth to us beyond your station. How chanceth your so proper speech ?”

“ Some pains were taken with my instruction, so please your Majesty,” replied the Jesuit ; “ and my long attendance as chamberlain to the Duke, and my residence abroad, have given me some few advantages.”

“ It is weel,” said the King ; “ now, seek ye out our falconer, auld Heronshaw, and instruct him of our pleasure, that ye do in future assist him in the care o’ the hawks, and that ye be provided wi’ an apartment near his own—But, hark ye, man, what is your name ?”

“ Francis Austin, may it please your Majesty,” said the Jesuit, “ is the name I have assumed, having dropped that of Patullo, by which I was known while in the Duke’s service, lest I should be recognised thereby.”

“ Right, right,” said his Majesty, “ it is weel ordered ; that might have discovered ye—so, enough o’ what is past ; let it not again be mentioned ; we will try the bird shortly.”

The Jesuit bowed low in token of obedience ; and, as he left the apartment, replied, “ The vassal of your Majesty knows how to be faithful to the commands of his King.”

CHAPTER VI.

Give me my **guerdon**—hard unyielding gold ;
Something to **touch** and handle for my service ;
No **visionary** payment will I have
That **slips** the fingers ere it be well grasp'd.

The Lombard.

WHEN the Jesuit retired from the apartment in which he had remained alone with the King for the space of half an hour, he immediately proceeded to join old Heronshaw, whom he found anxiously awaiting him in his chamber, where he was seated on a settle, with a small table before him, on which stood a flask of foaming ale.

“ Am I true prophet, or no ? ” said he, as soon as the Jesuit entered ; “ or has it been for naught that ye hae had sic a tack o’ his Majesty’s lug ? By my faith, but ye are

highly favoured else," continued he, with a glance in which curiosity and jealousy seemed contending ; for although he had predicted that much favour would be shewn him by the King on account of the falcon, yet was he not prepared for the degree of personal notice his Majesty had evinced towards him, in admitting him to so long and private a conference ; and, with the suspiciousness of age, augured no good to his own consequence from this circumstance. He continued, " But that supple knee o' thine, wi' the rest of your grand outlandish flourishes, maks a fool o' an auld Scotchman like me ; but let's hear how ye cam on, let's hear about it, and then we'll synd it down wi' a draught o' this double ale."

" In the first place, then," said the Jesuit, laying the bag of gold upon the table, " here is substantial proof of the truth of your prophecy ;—in addition to which I am to inform you of his Majesty's pleasure, that I am henceforward to divide with you the labours of your occupation, and am to

have an apartment assigned me somewhere hereabouts."

"The deevil!" said the old man, turning quickly round so as to face him, with a storm brewing in every feature, and his eyes flashing indignation and passion. "Then, mayhap, ye're to be my master—mayhap ye think to lord it ower me; but I rede ye, dinna reckon without your beads; the King's auld falconer canna lout sae low—but he can gie up the hounds and hawks, of which, in sooth, he's weel nigh tired."

As he said this, his voice sunk down into a querulous whine, somewhat between disappointment and sorrow.

"Nay," said the Jesuit, "do but hear me; you mistake the matter widely; you, to whom I owe my good fortune, cannot surely suppose me so ungrateful as to wish in aught to supplant you."

"Ay, ay, more fool I," interrupted the old man, "it wasna that ill to guess what wad be the upshot o' bringing you to the speech o' his Majesty, wi' a' your courtier-

like bowings and beckings that he likes sae weel."

"All this, however," replied the Jesuit, "can produce no consequences of which you shall have cause to repent, provided you will listen to me; and here is what shall prove it," continued he, laying his hand upon the money; "you see this bag—now, I *suppose* it is filled with coin, for it is yet unopened by me; I will ~~count~~ it out on this table, and divide it equally between us; and moreover, when I take more upon me than beseemeth a new comer, and one who ought to reverence your grey hairs, I will promise to forfeit my share, and pay the forfeit willingly."

Having said this, he turned out from the bag the fifty rose-nobles, twenty-five of which he pushed across the table before the wondering eyes of old Heronsbaw, whom his last speech had well nigh bewildered, and who sat looking one while on the gold, and another while on the Jesuit, as though he had been gazing on the slave of Aladdin's

lamp, and his golden treasures. At length, awakening as from a trance, he began to gather up the pieces, the touch of which seemed to alter the whole course of his ideas, and, grasping the Jesuit by the arm, he exclaimed, with a countenance and voice entirely divested of its former expression,

“ Dinna ye mind what I said, man—think nae mair o’t—it’s sac seldom a body forgathers wi’ the like o’ you, that, by my faith, it was nae meikle wonder an I took ye for a niding circumventing rascal.—But,” said he, picking up the remainder of his coin, “ I see there is still gratitude and discretion in the warld, and so, Master Austin, you and I winna cast out, though we should mak the proverb a lier, that saith, ‘ twa o’ ae trade canna agree ;’ and ye’re welcome to tak’ your ain gait o’ the sport, (always remembering to advise wi’ me afore faces, as is meet, ye ken ;) and wha kens but your outlandish fashions may be the lure to gar another pok o’ the red gowd light down upon your neive again some o’ thae

days ; for great folk," said he, in a confidential whisper, " are unco new fangled, and, by my troth, here's as pretty an instance o' it as ane should desire to see ; for here am I, wha was the first that flew falcon for his Majesty's sport, when he was a callant of ten summers in the castle of Stirling, and I, the Lord Mar's falconer, and yet I never had as muckle gowd afore, as now lies atween the leather of mine awn proper hide and this buff jerkin ;—but here's to thy farther guid fortune, an thou makest sae good use o' it !" said he, as he took a hearty pull at the flask, and handed it to his companion.

" I drink," said the Jesuit, " to our royal master's health, and to the filling of his coffers—pledge me, good Heronshaw, and then instruct me, who was that debonair youth with his Majesty in the park, who looked as mirth and he were sworn companions ?"

" And lang may they be sae !" returned the old man ; " for the Master of Ruthven is a free-hearted young gentleman, and a courageous, as ever put a foot in stirrup, and

they say he rides not mair featly than he dances, and that her Majesty the Queen hath never roused any man sae mcikle since the bonnie Earl o' Murray ;—but let that gang by, it's needless to listen to a' the idle clavers ane hears."

" True," replied the Jesuit, " and wisely spoken—but what said ye of the Earl of Murray ? for you know my long absence from Scotland hath made me a stranger to many circumstances that have been passing in the land, which you, who have been a retainer of the court, must be well acquainted with."

" There's some o' them, if I were ken'd to repeat, though," said Heronshaw, shrugging up his shoulders, " I might get sma' thanks for my pains ; but, as I tak ye to be a discreet man, I'll gi'e ye the screed o' a ballad anent the story o' the Earl ; and as it was sung, for aught I ken, on the town gait, there can be nac ill in that, ye ken.—How says it now ?" muttered he, " I'll surely mind some o' it.—Ay, ay, the twa or three

last verses will be enough." And he began to repeat them, taking the precaution, however, that his voice should not be heard beyond the door of his chamber.

" He was a braw gallant,
And he rode at the ring;
And the bonny Earl o' Murray,
Oh! he might hae been a king.

" He was a braw gallant,
And he play'd at the ba';
And the bonny Earl o' Murray
Was the flower o' them a'.

" He was a braw gallant,
And he play'd at the gluve;
And the bonny Earl o' Murray,
He was the *Queen's luv*."

" Now," said the old man, " that's the sang, and ye may gather gay and weel frae it, the sense o' the story; and ye see the Earl o' Huntly was at feud wi' him, and slew him; and ye couldna hinder the folk to blame greater folk nor Huntly for his death; but we hae naething ado wi' that—it caused

meikle disturbance a while, but the souch o' it's clean gane down the wind lang syne."

"Methinks, however," replied the Jesuit, "it were little to the profit of this young Master to become the burden of such another ditty."

"Nay," returned Hieronshaw, "it may be naught but idle clashes after a'; but this I ken, that he's high in favour wi' his Majesty at the present, wha canna want him out o' his sight, and hath made him ane o' the gentlemen o' his bed-chamber."

"This Master of Ruthven, if I mistake not, must be of the Gowrie family?" remarked the Jesuit.

"Even sae," said the old man; "he is brother to the young Earl that they are looking for hame frae far-awa' parts, and second son to William, Earl o' Gowrie, wha was beheaded at Stirling in the 1584; but the family's coming far ben again, for ane o' the dochters is married to the Duke o' Lennox, that's son to him that was banished, and is in muckle favour wi' the

King; and another o' them is here at the court, waiting on the Queen; and they say the King hauds an unco wark wi' the young Earl himsel, and a' body wishes weel to the family, for they were a' friends to the country, and bitter enemies to the Papists; and they say he's sair wearied for by the pastors of the kirk, for he's a powerful nobleman, baith on account o' his great possessions, and his being sae weel beloved by the people; and seeing that he is come o' them that were sic staunch upholders o' the kirk, the ministers think to get him on their side o' the question, and maybe recover some o' the privileges they have tyned; for to speak sooth, they are sair hauden in e'en now, and darena set up their faces to rebuke the gentles with that bauldness they war wont to do, since the Proclamation, three years syne, forbidding them to speak ony thing out o' the pulpit anent the King's Majesty, or his council; no that I am saying that they wad hae been the waur o' a wee bit

cowing, for they took unco liberties, baith wi' their Majesties and their court. Od! man, I mind o' the King's ain chaplain, Maister Craig, when he was preaching afore him, just after that Bothwell, wi' his complices, brak the Palace, railing at the King, wi' nae mair reverence nor I wad hae boasted a mangy tyke. He made his discourse anent the twa brazen mountains o' Zacharie, and tell'd him, as he had lightly regarded the mony bluidy sarks set afore him by his subjects, craving justice on the Papish lords, so God had justly made a noise o' crying, and a striking o' forehammers, to come to his ain Palace doors; and when his Majesty, after sermon, wad' fain hae cleared himsel to the folk, Maister Craig dismissed the congregation, and walked furth himsel."

"And how bore his Majesty such insolence?" said the Jesuit.

"O! he was unco wrath, nae doubt," said Heronshaw; "but what could he do mair, but just dismiss him frae his ain house-

hold. But they hae been weel hauden down in regard o' this, sin **the Proclamation**, as I said afore; and some **thought** the Queen had a finger in that pye, for they meddled sair wi' her about that time, and sent three o' the brethren to deal wi' her anent the want o' religious occupation o' hersel and her maidens, and anent **their workings**, maskings, ballings, and sic like divertisements; but troth they got little satisfaction at her hand, for she sent them word she had nae time to hear them, being at that present at the dancing.—But," said he, lifting the flask from the table, and peering to its bottom, "the ale stoup's as dry as it werd' gysand, sae e'en let us keep sic clavers till the next time we hae a stoup o' guid liquor afore us, for we maun gang now and find a chamber wherein thou may'st bestow thyself and thy gear."

So saying, he left the apartment to commence his search, accompanied by the Jesuit.

CHAPTER VII.

Away—begone—and give a whirlwind room,
Or I will blow you up like dust ! Avaunt !

LEF.

THE hour of midnight was approaching, when a young man, wrapped in a riding cloak, mounted on a fine horse, and followed by two servants, passed swiftly along the road toward Musselburgh, on his way to Edinburgh. A considerable quantity of snow had fallen during the day, the reflection of which, added to the light of a bright moon nearly at the full, and a cloudless sky thickly studded with stars, rendered distant objects plain and conspicuous, and those close at hand, almost as well seen as

by day-light. The travellers were about to enter the town of Musselburgh at the same rapid pace, when one of the attendants rode up to his master, who instantly stopped to learn the purport of this movement.

“ I have made bold, my lord,” said he, “ to inquire if it is your pleasure to bait the horses here, where there was, when I left Scotland, a most excellent inn, and where, if your lordship thinks proper, you can be provided with a good bed and some refreshment, which, under correction, your lordship must require ; and as you are not expected in Edinburgh, and the night wears apace, it may be better for your lordship to remain here till morning.”

“ I am much obliged to you, good Master Laurence, for your care of me,” said his lordship ; “ but as our horses, notwithstanding the journey they have made to-day, continue to carry us indifferently well, it is my pleasure that we reach Edinburgh to-night.”

“ Very well, my lord,” said his attend-

ant falling back, when his master again spoke.

“ I have just recollected that this is your native town—at least I think I have so heard ;—it is therefore possible you may be anxious to see some relative. If that is the case, you may remain here all night ; but be in the Cannongate early to-morrow morning.”

“ Many thanks, my lord,—I shall attend punctually to your commands,” said the man, as he turned off towards the inn at Loretto.

His master slackened his pace, and turned his gaze upward—for the late hour rendered it impossible for that night, that he should meet the friends, the hope of seeing whom had urged him forward with such speed.

There are few who have not felt the indescribable sensations of awe we experience, when looking on the magnificent arch of heaven and all its brilliant host, uniformly and perpetually revolving in their spheres ;

and this feeling, so natural to the human heart, must have been doubly strong at the time, when they were universally believed to have so great an ascendancy over our decaying and transient existence. It is in vain that the understanding would judge impartially of whatever is the subject of universal belief,—and even the strong and enlightened mind of this young nobleman, who was as little, or perhaps less tinctured with superstition than any of the age in which he lived, was still unable to detach itself from some portion of belief in this vain but seducing theory. He gazed intently on the firmament for some minutes. “And is it so,” thought he, “and do ye indeed, celestial intelligences, prognosticate in your aspects and conjunctions, the fate of each son of humanity? or is it fancy all? and do we but cheat ourselves with lying calculations? Well, be it as it may, ye are but the creatures of the universal Lord, and work but as He wills! Therefore, if ye have any influence on my fate, and human skill hath

read ye right, that ye frown upon my destiny, still will I make my supplications, undismayed, to that higher Source, secure of consolation and protection, while my heart is honest, and my actions just.—And I had need,” continued he, withdrawing his regards from the heavens, and fixing them on the surrounding objects, “much need, it may be, of divine protection, on returning to a country which so ill requited my noble and patriotic father, and whose weak-minded sovereign is ever swayed by favourites, however base. But, come weal, come woe, I am linked to it by too many attachments, and have too many duties to perform in it, to think of relinquishing it. Nay, how impossible that would be, I am at this moment convinced, while that well remembered city is just bursting on my sight, and causing my heart to beat high and quick within me. Yes,” he continued, “there is her venerable castle on its giant rock, reigning majestically over all the lesser objects of that city, whose many generations it hath

survived.—And there rises high into air the cloud of smoke which canopies the slumbering citizens;—and beneath it, you also repose, my beloved brother and sister!—a few hours more, and I shall fold you to my breast!”

Soon after this soliloquy, the Earl of Gowrie (for it was he of whom we have spoken) arrived before a large and handsome-looking house in the Canongate, into which, after brief space, he was admitted, and where we shall leave him while we return to his attendant, whom we left near the hostelry of Loretto, and who, on proceeding to the outward gate of the inn-yard, found it amply secured against intruders, it being the custom of its clerical landlord to have it fastened at an early hour; for so cautious was he of harbouring night-drinkers, that he preferred the loss of the custom of such to the chance of having his hostly occupation (by means of some night brawl committed in his house)

canvassed by the General Assembly, who were beginning about this period to look more narrowly into the affairs of their brethren of all denominations.

It was therefore in vain that he stood for the space of ten minutes smiting at the door with a pretty large stone which he had picked up for the purpose, and shouting with all the force of lungs none of the weakest. At length the drowsy voice of a boy, who acted as underling to the hostler, answered from the inside, "Wha the murrain are ye that keep sic a din at the yett, fit to waken the dead, and what want ye?" . . .

"What want I?" repeated the stranger; "why, to be let in certainly, with a curse upon your questions—cant ye unbar the gate? I promise you I am sufficiently tired of pounding at it."

"I shanna do ony sic thing tho'," responded the boy; "for we dinna let ony body in at this time o' night; it's quite and clean against the rules o' the house, and I

should get weel leathered if I were to open the yett; sae gang your gait to Gudeman Sowerbutt's, at the other end o' the toun, for he'll let ye in at any time."

"The wiser man he if he means to thrive," said he on the outside; "but now hearken to me, my good fellow! If you do not speedily give me and this good steed of mine entrance, I will bestow upon you such a hyding, as shall prevent your having the trouble of opening the gate for some days to come."

"Ay," said the boy, with a most provoking laugh of malicious irony; "but how will ye catch me, Master Swaggerer? Here I am jeest beside ye—naething but the door atween us—but let's see how ye'll won at me—it winna be the night, I'm thinking; and gin the house were a stir, I dinna think I'd fear ye muckle."

While the urchin, who imagined himself in perfect security, was indulging his humour at the expence of the excluded guest, the person he was tormenting made fast with all speed the bridle of his horse to one

of the iron rings, which were fixed on each side of the gate for that purpose ; and laying hold of one of the stones which alternately jutted out, in forming the side posts of the doorway, he began to ascend in the same manner in which he had frequently before made good his entrance in the days of boyhood ; and having arrived at the top of the wall, and taken a firm hold, dropped down a height of ten feet with the utmost ease beside the astonished boy, whom he seized upon with a most relentless gripe before he could make his way into the house.

“ Now,” said he, “ I rede your apeship nòt to be insolent to travellers hereafter ;” along with which admonition, he bestowed upon him some such hearty cuffs, that the boy began to bellow “ murder” most lustily. It was in vain, however, that he kicked and threw himself into all manner of postures ;—one hand of his corrector still kept its hold, till the other was weary of the pastime, which happening, however, at length, and the little wretch feeling him-

self at liberty, made all the haste toward the house which his unmerciful castigator had left in his power, but was closely followed by the stranger, to prevent the possibility of his still excluding him from the house by being the first to gain the entrance. Having therefore arrived both at the same time within that apartment, which we have before described as forming the public room of the inn, they found such of the inhabitants as had been disturbed by the screams of the boy already on foot, and employed in obtaining a light from the peats that were smouldering on the hearth, and which purpose a half-awakened, half-dressed damsel had just attained, when the stranger, stepping forward, took the lamp from her hand,—“Thou shalt be rewarded for this some other time, my nymph of the kettles,” said he, with a familiar nod.

The group at the fireside, which consisted of two female servants and the boy, all of whom, save the latter, were ignorant of what had caused the disturbance, eyed him

with much surprise, as the lamp which he held in his hand threw its glare across his undaunted features, and displayed his tall and powerful person, armed with a brace of pistols and a couteau, whose bright mountings flashed on their sight, as he extended his hand to lay hold once more on the boy, who shrieked out in miserable anticipation of another beating.

"I pray you compose yourself," said he, "most courteous mannikin, for thou shalt not have another beating until thou dost deserve it; therefore, I say, compose thyself, and answer me—What callest thou the hostler of this most serene and quiet inn, that admitteth not travellers after midnight, and keepeth their good steeds standing exposed to the frosty air?—Beshrew me, but this shall be looked to!—What call ye him, I say?"

"Griffy Girth," said the boy, in a sulky tone, which argued any thing but willingness to answer his question.

"Then shew me, without more ado,

where he hides himself," replied the stranger, still keeping hold of the boy's shoulder, and following him into a recess by the side of the outward door, whence they ascended by a few narrow steps to the loft over the stable.

"There—that's him," said the boy, pointing to a man who lay snoring in a corner, upon a bed formed of bundles of straw tied firmly together, and so filled up in the interstices, as to become a flat surface on the upper part.

"Now," said the stranger, "descend, my hopeful, and order them down yonder to have quickly in readiness what is becoming to set before a guest of quality, who hath not broken his fast for some hours, and whose appetite is none of the puniest withal.—Dost hear?—let them make dispatch, I say!—begone! and see thou savest thy bones by doing my bidding."

"Thy bidding, truly!" muttered the boy, as he descended—"I'll straight to his Reverence, and hear what he says to thy

devil's tricks ; for, if ye dinna be auld Beelzebub himsel, I'm sure ye're ane o' his whuppers-in."

"Hollo ! Griff—Hostler !" said the stranger, shaking him roughly by the arm.

"Hollo ! who calls ?" replied he, at the same time flinging his legs over and sitting upright on the side of his miserable bed, while he rubbed his eyes, and stretched them wide upon the armed figure that stood before him. "Wha are ye ? and what make ye here ?" said he.

"Rub thine eyes again, man," said the intruder, pushing back his hat, which he wore somewhat flapped; and holding up the lamp, that its rays might fall full upon his countenance. "Rememberest thou nought of these features ? At all events thou hast not surely forgotten the cask of brandy-wine, and the lad that crept through the hole scarce big enough for a cat, that he might accommodate thee with thy nightly potations."

"Now the deevil broil me, if ye can be

other than my young master," said the hostler, springing on his feet, and raising the stranger's hand that held the lamp, till its light fell once more on his face. "Ay! ay! there's the scar abune the upper lip, that ye got when ye fell frae climbing the corbie's nest at the Craigs; it's no jeest covered by the black hair that grows sae thick about it, and gies ye sae muckle the semblance of a bravo."

"A bravo, quotha!" said the stranger; "good Master Hostler, know that you speak to one, whose six years experience hath taught him not to let any man insult him, much less such as thee."

"Na, my master," replied the hostler, "when I likened thee to a bravo, I did but intend the comparison in respect o' thy courageous bearing; for methinks ye look, armed as ye now are, fit to cope wi' some half score o' fellows, whae might nathless still maintain some character for manhood. But I aye said ye would return some day sic as I now see ye."

“ A plague upon thee and thy long-winded stories !” said his young master ; “ make haste and don thy rags, and bear in mind that my horse standeth this cold night tied to the gate ; meanwhile, answer me quickly—How fareth it with my mother ? and wherefore are the doors of this inn barred against the night-traveller ?”

“ Your mother remains fat and fair ; but doubtless ye have heard o’ your father’s death, and that she hath married a minister o’ the reformed Kirk ?” said the hostler.

“ Of my father’s death I was informed,” returned he, “ but not of this cursed marriage ; they shall find it no easy matter, though, to cheat me out of my patrimony, to claim which, I have returned from a country much more to my taste.—So, ho ! this barring out of guests is all along of this ghostly father’s contriving, then, I’ll warrant me ?—But I shall see to this—I’ll have no psalm-singing priest in this hostel, or he shall pay well for his quarters.”

“Guid luck to ye, my worshipful master!” said Griffy—“ may it even happen as ye say, for we hae seen nae sic guid days sin ye left us.”

“ Thou shalt see them again, bully Griffy,” said Laurence.—“ But hold!—what hast thou here in this pottle-pot by the side of thy lair ?”

“ Only,” replied the hostler, “ a soup ale to wash the stour out o’ my throat, and gar me sleep without dreaming.”

“ It shall do the more knightly service of washing my throat instead of thine, then,” said he, as he swallowed the whole at a draught.—“ Now get thee gone to my nag, and see that thou dost him all imaginable justice, for he is a horse of price, and none of your common aivers.”

“ Never fear,—ye ken of old that I may be trusted with a good horse,” said the hostler, as he slid through a trap-door into the stable below, and left Laurence to descend again to the room he had before

quitted, and where he now found his mother, in addition to those he had left there when he went in search of the hostler. Taking, however, no notice of her, he exclaimed, on seeing no preparation for the meal he had ordered,—

“ Why stand ye here all a-gape ? where are the viands that were to satisfy my inward cravings ? Fly, I say, instantly, and produce your best !—And, I say, my good wench,” speaking to her from whom he had taken the lamp, “ heap up that fire with wood, and make it burn quickly ; and, look ye, draw that small table in the corner nearer to it, and there let the viviers be placed. And, hark ye, good myrmidons, henceforth know me for the owner of this hostel, and your master, and for one who is determined to be obeyed as such. And you, Master Drawer, Pantler, Tapster, or whatever thou callest thyself, bring forth some of your best wines, not forgetting the emperor of all, the cup of brandy-wine, fittest beverage for such nights as these.”

While the domestics flew to obey him, not daring to do otherwise, he walked up to where our hostess stood in silent amazement, not being at first able to determine whether he was or was not her long-lost son. There was something in his voice and manner that irresistibly fixed her gaze upon him; but his altered appearance, and his ruffianly air, seemed to make her feel an instinctive dread of hearing him avow his relationship.

“And now, my lady mother,” said he, dropping on his knees before her with a look of mock reverence, “here is your dutiful son come to claim his patrimony, and your blessing on him and it.”

“Alas!” said his mother, bursting into tears, “and how have ye returned to me, Laurence, after being sae lang mourned for?—get up, for shame! and mock me not wi’ this show of duty, when ye have already defied me to my face, by declaring this house thine, and thyself master over my servants.”

At this moment a voice sounded from the opposite side of a large oaken table which stood in the midst of the apartment —“ And know, young man,” it said, “ that I am thy father, and will compel thy duty to thy mother ; for, doth not the scripture say, ‘ the Lord hath confirmed the authority of the mother over her sons ? ’ ”

Laurence started on his feet, and faced the utterer of this speech, whose person was closely wrapped in a sheet, that he had drawn from his bed to cover him, while he listened within the open door of his own chamber to what was passing in the hall. Being induced to this by the report of the boy, in which, though it had raised his wife from her bed, he apprehended nothing more than the act of a wilful traveller, who was determined to make good his quarters for the night ; he therefore did not appear till provoked by hearing Laurence style himself master of the house ; when he sallied forth, equipped in his sheet, as we have

said, and was further moved to make himself known, by the declaration of his son-in-law, that he was come to claim his patrimony.

We have said that Laurence stood opposite to our host, whom affecting to mistake for an apparition,—“Thou my father!” said he—“lying spirit, avaunt thee for a bungling fiend!—thou hast not even taken his resemblance to cheat me withal! But methinks thou hast stolen his winding-sheet, and I may use so much freedom as to put mine own mark upon it.” So saying, he drew a pistol from his belt in the twinkling of an eye, cocked it, and fired in the direction of our terrified host, being careful, however, so to take his aim at the under part of the gallery that ran round the room, as not to injure him. It was, however, doubtful whether this was a needful precaution or not; for our host, not altogether liking the displacing of the pistol, had, at the instant of his firing, taken

the protection of the table, by ensconcing himself under it.

The scene of confusion which ensued on the report of the pistol cannot easily be described. The bullet had entered the gallery near to the apartment of the Abbess, whose appearance above in the gallery instantly followed the piercing shriek which she uttered, as she sprung from her bed with all the agility of a girl of sixteen. At the same moment other doors opened, and several people, who had been guests for the night, rushed out of their chambers to demand the occasion of this outrage, which no one seemed capable of explaining except the person who had committed it, and who stood apparently enjoying the uproar he had occasioned, with a countenance in which the most mischievous expression was mingled with triumphant mirth, while, totally regardless of the commotion around him, he employed himself in deliberately reloading the pistol he had fired, and replacing it in his belt ; nor did he appear even to hear

the lengthened sobs of his mother, whom he had frightened into a fit of hysterics, but, addressing the people, who were clamorous for an explanation,—

“ Peace, my masters !” he said ; “ and, trust me, none of you are in any danger from my weapons ; nay, on the contrary, I think it probable that I have this night preserved you all from becoming the prey of the foul fiend, and descending with him to Tophet, and that by means of this very pistol which hath so much alarmed you—Nay, look not incredulous, my friends, for I swear that there he stood, wrapt in grave-clothes, and calling himself the apparition of my father, who was owner of this house, and hath been several years dead. Now, judge, my masters, between me and this cowardly spirit, who vanished at the first flash of the pan, whether I, who have but this night returned, after an absence of six years, was to allow myself to be braved in mine own house by this malicious devil,

who hath taken possession of it in my absence, and whose wish, it appeareth to me, was to terrify me from claiming my just and lawful property, foreseeing, no doubt, that a man of my kidney was not likely to submit quietly to the pranks he hath been in the practice of amusing himself withal ;—such as, excluding night-travellers from the convenience of this inn, much to the detriment of its good fame, and the prejudice of its owner's profit. It hath also been his custom, it would appear, to be seen at times under this roof as a tun-bellied host, not acting, however, as becometh the character he assumeth, but avoiding to welcome his guests, as in duty bound. And, still more strange to relate, he cometh at other times in the shape of a reformed minister, with cloak and band, and taketh upon him to quote scripture—nay, hath been heard to imitate psalm-singing, making a droning sort of noise, no doubt in derision of those pious Presbyterians, who, having discovered the sinfulness of praising their Maker with

melody, have banished all harmony from their worship."

"Now, out upon thee, sacrilegious monster!" exclaimed mine host, as he rose from under the table, "dost revile my sacred office, with thy gibes and jeers?"

"Hark! I hear again the voice of the evil one; and, if mine eyes deceive me not," said Laurence, "I perceive the fiend rising like a white mist, in the very spot where he appeared before.—Nay, then, I must again apply mine exorcist." And he laid his hand upon the pistol, which was, however, arrested in the act of drawing it forth, by the strong arm of a guest, who, having issued from a door at his back, had stood unperceived behind him during his extraordinary harangue. At this act of coercion he turned quickly round, with the fire leaping from his fierce and deeply-set black eyes. No sooner, however, did he encounter the glance of the Jesuit, than he burst into a most obstreperous and uncontrollable fit of laughter, in which, contrary to his cau-

tious habit of regulating every word, look, and movement by that crafty policy, which ever shunned giving offence to any one, the Jesuit heartily joined, especially as he perceived mine host, taking advantage of the momentary inattention of his persecutor, cautiously moving off toward his chamber, like a fox stealing from cover, and at the same time keeping his eye fixed upon Laurence, whom he began to imagine in a state of derangement. He therefore retreated with all possible expedition, and having gained his sleeping apartment, bolted and barricadoed the door within, leaving those on the outside to settle the matter with the supposed maniac as they best might, while he disencumbered himself of the sheet, and began to grope about for his ordinary apparel, not daring to attempt to procure a light to direct him in his search, or to go to bed again, lest some attack should be made upon him while in that defenceless state.

CHAPTER VIII.

Patience, I pray you ;—'twas a fault unwilling—

— — — — —
—————to-morrow't shall be mended.

SHAKSPEARE.

LAURENCE had no sooner recovered from the fit of merriment in which he had indulged, on perceiving that the Jesuit had been witness to the strange scene recorded in the last chapter, than he exclaimed—
“ What, my friend !—thou hast then followed my directions, and discovered the Hostel of Loretto, where I make thee most heartily welcome ; and the rather, that thou hast arrived in time to see me banish to the Red Sea that unwieldy apparition—that hypocritical craven, who, taking advantage of my ~~absence~~ absence, hath married himself to my

stock and steeding, my house garniture, and mine ale and wine-butts."

"Nay, cease thy vociferation," said the Jesuit—"thou art surely beside thyself!—I never saw thee in so wild a humour. And, credit me," he continued, lowering his voice, so as only to be heard by him he was addressing, "if you persist in this madness, your hopes of emolument from me are like to vanish into smoke. I beseech thee, therefore, give over these wilful pranks, and be ruled into somewhat more sober seeming. I have much to inform thee of; but, if thou dost not put a curb upon thy folly, how thinkest thou any wise man will commit to thee the management of aught in which discretion is required?"

"Now, on my soul, ye know not the provocation!" replied Laurence.—"Here came I to-night, hungry and weary with the day's hard travel, and find the door of mine own house barred against me, and am commanded by a devil's sucking imp to get me gone, because it was untimely hours, for-

sooth, to break upon the slumbers of the godly host !—but I will so firk him, that he shall speedily be fain to slumber somewhere else !”

“ What !” said the Jesuit, “ beginning again !—But I have warned you, for your own interest,—if you profit not, the fault is none of mine—But, look ye, here is earnest,”—shewing him a purse half filled with gold,—“ that, if we act well our part, fortune will perform hers to our satisfaction. And I advise thee once more, now that the object of thy dislike hath withdrawn at thy bidding, to trouble thyself no more about him, at least for this night, but console your poor mother, who sitteth yonder, scarce recovered from the swoon into which your violence hath thrown her ; and when thou hast done so, lay aside your weapons, and eat your supper, which is prepared yonder by the fire.”

“ Beshrew my heart, but thou speakest wisely, and enforcest thine argument most pithily” returned he ; “ for the gold and

the viands are with me, by my faith, most necessary commodities, for this pocket lacketh even a coin to play at cross-and-pile withal, and my very inward bowels croak like a nest of young ravens!—therefore, good seignor, I am thine to command.—**Mother,**” said he, advancing to the bench on which she sat, leaning her head against the wall, “I am come to comfort thee, seeing I am sorry thou hast been so much affrighted, notwithstanding thou hast comforted thyself, much to my discomfort, in putting this holy caitiff in the place of my late worshipful father, whom God rest, who would never have deprived me of my birth-right, although somewhat displeased at my leaving him without his consent, and more especially, mayhap, at my making his purse of mole-skin the companion of my journey. But what then?—I was not the first lad of spirit that had hankered after foreign countries; and for the matter of the gold, he was too reasonable not to acknowledge that there was no travelling without it.

Therefore, I pray you leave off groaning so piteously, and thou shalt find me henceforth a dutiful son, provided Master Priest meddleth not in my matters, and doth not again presume to call himself my father. And look ye, mother," continued he, imitating the action of counting money with his right hand into the left, "you must be liberal—you must disburse, understand me; for I have certain knowledge that this hostel is a good concern, and if I go not snags, I prophecy it will soon become mine own altogether. Ponder on this, good mother;—and thou hadst best, as I think, betake thee to thy bed, for thou lookest wondrous cold, and shakest as though thou hadst seen a ghost in very deed."

"Now, God be merciful unto me!" returned his mother, as she rose to depart from the public room—"is it matter o' wonderment, think ye, that I should quake at beholding mine ain proper son turned bully and man-queller? and that I should hae a ~~low~~fu' heart at hearing an honest

and reverend man, who is a mense to us a', basely reviled, because he hath ta'en part in my joys and my sorrows, when I was forsaken by thee, and had nane else to solace me?"

"I tell thee, mother, thou knowest my mind—it is fixed and unalterable," said Laurence; "therefore, I wish thee good rest, and a clear understanding of thine own interest.—But harkce," continued he, as she was moving toward her own chamber, "now I think on't, thou hadst best give me what ready cash thou hast, for mine occasions press, seeing my pockets are bare, and that my Lord of Gowrie oweth me no remuneration at this present."

"My Lord of Gowrie!" repeated his mother; "why, I was informed by the Master of Ruthven that ye had lang since left his service!"

"True; but it is also as true that I returned to his service, and that I am more in favour than my fellow knaves, as that he this night passed through this town, al-

lowing me to remain here till to-morrow morning."

"I marvel muckle," replied his mother, "that sae wise and gude a young lord, for so the bruit of him runneth, should maintain in his service one who appeareth to have profited sae little by his ensample."

"Nay now, mother, thou knowest me not," said Laurence; "assure thyself I am as sober a lad as any Presbyterian of them all, barring when the wine flask and I get too intimate, or when I am contradicted; for thou mayest remember, that of old I never could bear contradiction. But thou hast answered nothing in respect of the cash; go, therefore, in search of thy money-bags, while I satisfy mine hunger."

"Upon the faith o' a Christian woman, then," said his mother, "there is not sae muckle as a cross within these doors, seeing I have this very night paid Deacon Bull-cleaver his charges for furnishing us some months by-past wi' flesh; but take

grace to thysel, and ye shall not want such supply as in reason ye can desire."

"Well, on these conditions, I am pacified," said he; "only remember, that I shall return in a few days to claim thy promise; in the meantime, farewell."—And he strode off, without giving time for reply, to the table on which his meal was placed, and where he found his friend already seated. Observing, however, that some of the guests and servants still remained, in expectation, most probably, of another brawl,—

"My masters," said he to the guests, "I pray you betake yourselves to your pillows incontinently, for the play is played out, and there will be no more sport, inasmuch as the old brock hath gone to ground; and as for you, ye lick-platter rascals," continued he to the menials, "slink off;—but hold!—what have we here?—the stale trick of a cold quarter of lamb, with the tail of a kid craftily appended to it, making it appear what it is not!—fy upon such knavery, which

satisfieth the eye, and disappointeth the palate!—And what is this?—so!”—tasting a small flask—“this brandy-wine is passable;” and applying his lips in the same way to a larger flask—“this claret is of the right smack!—somewhat cold and weak for the weather, but his auxiliary here shall qualify him.—So now leave us, varlets!—and, dost hear?—tell Griff Hostler to have my horse saddled by seven hours to-morrow, for so early I must ride.—And now that time serves,” said he, addressing the Jesuit as soon as the room was cleared of the servants, and speaking between each mouthful as he swallowed his supper, “how fareth it with thine ancient charge, thy kinswoman? is she also^d lodged under this roof?—and thy hawk—thy bird of birds, who is to lay the golden eggs?—come, discourse unto me concerning these matters; but, more especially, let me understand how mine interest stands affected in that purse, with which thou didst even now becalm mine angry humours?”

“ That purse is thine, with its contents,” replied the Jesuit, handing it over to him, “ and contains no less than twenty-five rose-nobles—so much for the assistance thou hast already given me ; and this is but an earnest of thy recompense, provided we accomplish the purpose for which I and the companion of my journey are here ; but bear in mind the demeanour which is necessary on your part, and believe not that I can continue to shower gold upon you, if your conduct becomes not more circumspect than thou hast this night given example of. The Abbess is now in this hostel, and, alarmed beyond all caution by your inconsiderate folly, stood during the affray in that corridor, invoking the tutelar saint of her convent and the holy Virgin, with such loud and earnest supplication, that nothing but the babble of tongues below, and the affright of the people themselves, prevented their making such remarks as must have given grounds for very troublesome suspicions. Fortunately, however, I had not retired to

repose when you first sallied into the house, and recognizing your voice, entered this apartment in time to catch her eye, and give her a most earnest signal of silence, before the alarm had sufficiently subsided to admit of her being attended to ; you therefore may perceive the consequences in which this wild folly of yours had nearly involved us."

" A plague on that tempting draught of stout ale that stood so invitingly by the hostler's bed-side !" said Laurence ; " which, taken into my empty stomach, ascended me into the brain, and prompted so forcibly my wish of terrifying that old hypocrite ;—but I am schooled—I am edified, and will forswear all such misdemeanours for the future,—and thou knowest I can be firm when I list."

And without that knowledge on my part, friend, thou also knowest," replied the Jesuit, " that thou hadst not now been here, or, in all probability, alive at this moment, and most assuredly not trusted in ~~any~~ ^{an} affair of such perilous consequence,

as that wherein I have pledged myself to him in whose power it lies to requite us with principalities, could we do aught to deserve such reward."

"I would that I knew what sort of service would send a principality my way," said Laurence, "and I'll promise you I would not be too scrupulous in the method of earning it."

"I speak, nevertheless, of possibilities," said the Jesuit; "for there is no saying how far we may recommend ourselves to further notice, if we first bring to pass, with regard to this girl, what our employers are so anxious to accomplish; and we have already made a fair beginning, as thou shalt hear."

He then faithfully related all that had passed since his landing in Scotland, excepting, that in describing his interview with the King, he did not mention the fabricated tale by which he had imposed on his Majesty, but left Laurence to suppose he owed his success entirely to old Hieron-

shaw and the merits of the falcon, and that the gold was given as a recompense for the latter.

It may not be improper to inform the reader, before proceeding farther, of the circumstances which introduced the Jesuit and Laurence to the knowledge of each other, for which purpose it will be necessary to give a short history of the latter, during the six years he had passed abroad. It is already known that he attended the Earl of Gowrie, who went at the age of seventeen, accompanied by his brother, the Master of Ruthven, to Padua, to complete his education, and where many causes combined to make his master regard him with a favorable eye. He was about his own age,—of a shrewd comprehension, and a cheerful temper,—zealous and diligent in his attendance, and had with so much earnestness volunteered to follow him abroad, that the man must have been of a disposition diametrically opposite to that of the youthful Earl, who could have refused to

reward his services by distinguishing kindness. But, perhaps, what weighed with the Earl still more than the qualifications we have mentioned, was his being his countryman. For whosoever hath journeyed far from home, knows full well the value which the mind attaches to the most unimportant persons or things when associated with that place so dear to memory—that territory of the heart, which possesses, for fond fancy, a charm never attached to any other spot.

The Earl and his brother left Scotland with only three attendants; Laurence and another young man, who were their body servants, and a judicious old man, who was foster-father to the Earl, and who accompanied him from motives of love, and as a sort of sedative, furnished by the young noblemen's anxious and affectionate mother, to operate in some measure on the buoyant spirits of themselves and their attendants; and who having served the late Earl long and faithfully, was destined to be comptroller of his sons' household while abroad, where

they were to hire what other servants were necessary.

Laurence remained nearly two years with the Earl of Gowrie ; when forming a transient attachment to a young woman in the service of a Spanish family of distinction then at Padua, he engaged himself in the service of her master, and went with him to Spain, where, losing the moral advantages he had enjoyed in the well-regulated household of the Earl, under the eye of old Adam, already mentioned, as the superintendant of the domestics, he became dissipated and licentious, and having frequently changed his masters during three years that he continued in Spain, he associated himself with the most abandoned of his species, and was at length lodged in the Inquisition, on a charge of aggravated heresy, in having sacrilegiously turned into ridicule the modes and forms of the Catholic worship.

It was at this time, that, sanctioned by the Pope, the Jesuit was engaged in exa-

mining the prisons of the Inquisition in several of the continental countries, in quest of such daring spirits as were expected to prove useful in carrying into execution those plots and conspiracies, framed by the Society of which he was a member, and in which they so frequently at that period engaged ; and being forcibly struck with the courage and constancy with which Laurence endured the tortures inflicted upon him, he learned from him his history ; when it immediately occurred to him, that, in becoming reinstated in the service of the Earl of Gowrie, he might prove of essential service to him, by becoming a spy upon his master's actions. He therefore offered to liberate him, on his promising fidelity to himself, and on condition of his renouncing the reformed religion for that of Rome. To the former of these proposals, he annexed the prospect of munificent reward ; and the latter, being a matter of too little moment to occasion any hesitation in a mind totally divested of religious scruples,

he was, in consequence of his acquiescence, immediately emancipated from his perilous situation.

No sooner was he at liberty, than the Jesuit, furnishing him with money, sent him into Norway (which was at that period the country most famed for good hawks) in search of a falcon, of the rarest and most valuable kind. Laurence was indefatigable in the accomplishment of his commission; and, by means of a high bribe, obtained from one of the King of Denmark's falconers, who went annually into Norway, to make a selection from the most valuable kinds, the white gyr-falcon, already so often mentioned; and which the Jesuit no sooner got into his possession, than he delivered to a skilful falconer, to complete its training; while he set himself to acquire a thorough knowledge of woodcraft, in which he soon became a proficient.

Meanwhile, Laurence, acting by the Jesuit's directions, returned to the Earl of Gowrie, then residing at Geneva; and feign-

ing the greatest attachment to him, and the deepest contrition for having left his service, he found it no difficult task to prevail on him to receive him again into his employment; especially as the Earl was then on the eve of returning to Scotland, and did not intend carrying with him any of his foreign domestics.

The Jesuit, about this time, hastened to Rome; and taking the Abbess under his protection, travelled through Germany, and embarked in a vessel from the Texel, bound for the port of Leith, a few miles short of which place, they were safely landed in the commencement of this story; and where, according to the direction of Laurence, whom the Jesuit had made acquainted with the particulars of his mission to Scotland, in as far as it concerned the Abbess and her niece, it was his intention to have inquired for the Hostel of Loretto, had he not been immediately directed to it by the fisherman; intending to take up his abode there, until the arrival of his colleague, who had

agreed to introduce him to old Heronshaw, and who was now attending the Earl through France and England, on his way to Scotland ; where, as the foregoing relation has already conducted him, we shall now again follow, with alacrity, the course of our story.

CHAPTER IX.

Fair as the first that fell of womankind,
When on that dread yet lovely serpent smiling,
Whose image then was stamp'd upon her mind—
But once beguiled—and ever more beguiling;
Dazzling, as that, oh! too transcendent vision,
To sorrow's phantom-peopled slumber given;
When heart meets heart again, in dreams Elysian,
And paints the lost on earth revived in Heaven;
Soft, as the memory of buried love;
Pure, as the prayer which childhood wafts above,
Was she——

BYRON.

THE Earl of Gowrie having already had a private interview with his brother and sister, who were then, as we have said, in attendance on the King and Queen, was, on the second day of his arrival in Edinburgh, accompanied by his brother-in-law, the Duke of Lennox, ushered into the audience-chamber at Holyrood, through a

crowd of courtiers ; to most of whom the Master of Ruthven, proud of his accomplished brother, exultingly introduced him ; and as he passed through a long file of lords, knights, and gentlemen, it might have caused much amusing speculation in an acute and unconcerned spectator, to have witnessed the difference of feeling manifested in the several countenances of the courtly throng, as the name of the young Earl was buzzed through the ranks of the antichamber. A few of the old nobles greeted him with that deep interest, with which it was natural to regard the representative of his father, who had been their ancient colleague : and who, although they had separated themselves from him in his misfortunes, yet bore his disastrous, and what they considered, his unmerited fate, fresh in their memories. While the eyes of these grisly warriors wandered in examination over his athletic and manly figure, as if looking for the promise of those

“ thewes and sinews” which were to fit him for future warlike service, those who had been of the faction of his father’s enemies, marked the fire and dignity of his eye, and shrunk from his gaze with an involuntary dread of retribution. And ever and anon might be detected the prying glance of some young gallant, taking ample note of the foreign fashion and materials of his doublet, and the cut and air of his ruff; while the more estimable among the young nobility, pressed eagerly forward to secure an introduction, beholding in him a model of all that was noble and engaging, on which to form their own manners and bearing.

But however diversified the feelings of the spectators, we may venture to affirm, that never was any man viewed with sentiments of more general approbation: imperiously called forth by his grandeur of mien, his beauty of person, and a countenance which appeared the index of all that is exalted, frank, and noble.

As the Earl advanced into the room of audience, his Majesty hurried toward him, and met him half way, as one whom he delighted to honour; and as the Earl bent his knee, to do the customary homage to royalty, the King himself assisted him to rise, by taking his hand, which he familiarly retained in his own for some time, and shook with a cordiality which each favourite in the presence felt in his every nerve; beholding him possessed of all those outward endowments most likely to prepossess and fascinate a master, so notoriously the slave of exterior accomplishments; and their selfish fears were considerably increased, when they observed the unrepressed delight with which the King beheld him, and the ardour which accompanied his recommendation of him to the Queen, who, seated under a rich canopy at the upper end of the room, and surrounded by her ladies, had apparently, from his first entrance into the chamber, impatiently awaited the moment of introduction. The Earl knelt before her

footstool, with all the devotion he considered due to her sex and rank ; and put his lips to the uncommonly white hand which she extended towards him, with a grace and gallantry which made apparently the most favourable impression, and called a blush of pleasure to the cheeks, and lighted up the eyes of his royal mistress with animation.

“ We congratulate you, my lord,” said the Queen, in a lively tone, “ on your safe return to your native country ; and not less do we felicitate ourself on obtaining so gallant an acquisition to our court ; which, possessing fewer attractions, we fear, than those of France and England, which you have just visited, will yet, we trust, be found equally impressed with a sense of the high literary fame your lordship hath acquired, and which hath been borne to us even at this distance,—reflecting high honour on the Scottish genius.”

Her Majesty, who prided herself on her own literary talents, and therefore lost no

opportunity of shewing that she patronized learning, here alluded to the Earl's having been, in the last year of his residence at Padua, elected to the Rector's chair of that university, which he had filled with such ability, that, as a mark of honour, his coat-of-arms and titles had been hung up in its great hall; the learned members of that celebrated college, at the same time, publicly expressing their profound admiration of his youthful application and extraordinary talents.

The Earl bowed low to this flattering eulogium of the Queen. "My poor pretensions to commendation have indeed met a rich reward in the approbation of your Majesty; who, I hope, will forgive my presumption," he added, "when I say, that neither in the court of France, nor of England, has a display of greater attractions met my sight than is now presented on the spot where I have the honour to stand."

As the Earl said this, he cast a respectful and admiring glance, first on the Queen,

and then on the ladies by whom she was encompassed.

“What thinks the Lady Beatrix Ruthven?” said the Queen, addressing herself to a young lady who stood on the left of her chair. “May we venture to give credit to so distinguished a compliment, or must we, in our humility, consider it merely a specimen of that flattery which we understand is brought to such refined perfection at the court of Elizabeth; and thus beware of trusting to it too implicitly?”

“Nay,” replied the young lady, “since your Majesty does me the honour to command my opinion, I must confess, that I see no reason why our humility should deprive us of that which is our undoubted right, being fully persuaded of the unimpeachable veracity of my brother, and feeling every inclination to place unbounded confidence in his taste and discernment.”

And laying her hand at the same time on the arm of a girl about eighteen, who appeared to be sheltering herself from ob-

servation behind her during this dialogue, she drew her gently forward. "And here is Lady Agnes," she continued, "completely of my opinion; and so are many others in this circle, (as she looked round her with an arch smile,) though none of them will be so sincere in confessing a hearty belief in their own perfections as your gracious Majesty's spoilt girl."

The Lady Agnes shook her head, with a half reproving glance at her volatile friend, which, as it shot timidly from beneath the long dark fringes of her eyelids, gave an irresistible fascination to her countenance, and drew on her the regards of the Earl of Gowrie, who thought he had never beheld a being so femininely lovely. She was dressed in a mourning robe, composed of black velvet, divested entirely of ornament, save that the sleeves, in compliance with the taste and example of the Queen, were looped above the elbow, with strings of large pearls, of which also her necklace was formed, and the band that confined her hair.

—her height was considerably above the middle size, and her figure, though fragile, beautifully proportioned,—the sable garment in which it was clothed serving to set off to the utmost advantage (though in truth it required it not) the transparent whiteness and delicate texture of her skin. The profuse ringlets of her dark and bright brown hair fell over her forehead nearly to her eyes, which were of the darkest grey, beaming with a touching softness, which seemed to speak some cause of melancholy not yet subdued, and gave a sublime expression to features which a Grecian statuary would have loved to copy. Yet when a smile parted her beautiful lips, and radiantly lighted up her countenance, it evidently but recalled the expression of youthful hope and chastened animation most natural to it, and, joined with an air of gentle dignity, gave to her whole appearance an attraction that formed an appeal to every heart, and seemed, by a sort of magic, to awaken its best sympathies.

Such was the interesting young creature

on whom the Earl of Gowrie fixed for a space his eager gaze, till, conscious of its apparent rudeness, and the ardent admiration it expressed, he withdrew his regards, and, as if by courtly instinct, transferred them to the Queen, who, no way slow in interpreting the language of his eyes, had been regarding their expressive glances at her young attendant, with that degree of resentment not unusually evinced by a proud and vain woman, when placed in the immediate neighbourhood of superior attractions, which her penetration enables her to perceive are fully appreciated. And, in truth, her Majesty's own personal claims to admiration were of no mean class, which was now more fully remarked by Gowrie.

Anne of Denmark, then about six-and-twenty years of age, was of a commanding height, and of a handsome, though rather large figure, with a complexion of that dazzling fairness generally the concomitant of yellow hair—her large blue eyes were remarkably clear and animated, and her eye-

brows of a shade darker than her hair, delicately delineated and much arched, gave an expression of grandeur to her high and polished forehead, which was much exposed by the manner of parting the hair—her mouth was small, and her nose inclining to the Roman. But although not a feature, taken singly, could be censured, (with perhaps the exception of her cheek-bones, too prominent for perfect beauty,) yet the whole combination and contour was far from pleasing. It was bold and somewhat masculine—traces of vanity and pride lurked in every line, and consciousness of superiority that rose to haughtiness.

Her hair, of which she was particularly vain, was arranged with scrupulous attention, and kept from encroaching on her forehead by a circlet of precious stones, while the longer tresses of its golden threads were, at the back, some of them confined by bodkins richly gemmed, and some allowed to fall upon her shoulders, which were uncovered as low as any modern belle could

possibly approve ; her arms were also bare considerably above the elbows, and ornamented with richly wrought and costly bracelets, overlooked, however, in the admiration excited by her exquisitely turned hands and arms, of which the polished symmetry was only exceeded by the extreme whiteness.

The attractions of her figure, however, were considerably impaired by a dress of rich rose-coloured taffety, much loaded with ornaments, disposed with so little judgment as to render them heavily cumbersome ; for her love of splendour and magnificence was ever more conspicuous than her good taste.

No sooner did her Majesty perceive the attention of the Lord Gowrie fixed exclusively on herself, than the displeasure which had tinged her haughty features passed off, and her face became again resplendent with smiles.

“ Surely,” said her Majesty, turning and addressing the Master of Ruthven, who stood behind her chair, “ never were men

blessed with such a sister. You hear the unbounded credit the Lady Beatrix has just given to the flattering assertions of the Earl, your brother ; and," she continued, with an air of coquettishness, and a look of favour which but ill accorded with her words, " we hope you are fully aware that were you not indebted to her good offices, you would forfeit our favour ten times in the day by your madcap practices."

" Now, Heaven forefend," replied the young gentleman, with that degree of seriousness befitting the occasion, " that your Majesty should ever withdraw from your unworthy slave the light of that countenance, without which he would pine in darkness and sorrow ; but though I humbly acknowledge my many delinquencies, if I dared to speak it, I would say, that, like the blessed sun, whose beams nourish into luxuriance the worthless weed, so has your Majesty's undeserved favour nurtured that happy lightness of spirit which your Ma-

jesty has now thought it necessary to reprove."

"Nay, good Ruthven," returned the Queen, "look not so seriously on it, we did but jest; and trust our word, that knight-errantess, thy sister, who is ever ready to undertake thy cause, has power sufficient to combat the evil effects of all those deeds of thoughtlessness thou hast yet committed, or, I dare believe, ever wilt commit."

This sweeping pardon was replied to by Ruthven's laying his hand on his breast, accompanied by a low and grateful obeisance.

At this moment his Majesty, as if inquisitive with regard to what had called forth this gesture, and the gratified air with which it was accompanied, left a nobleman with whom he had been some minutes in conversation, and joined the group at the Queen's chair; he arrived however too late, for the dialogue had ceased, and the fidgetty impatience of his manner and countenance could not escape the most superficial observers, as

he looked for explanation first on the Queen, and then on Ruthven ;—he, however, made no inquiries in words, and, after a moment's pause, addressed himself to Gowrie.

“ Heard ye aught, my Lord,” said he, “ from our sister o’ England, o’ the request we hae lately made her to send us a band o’ thae merry wags o’ players for which her capital is at this present sae famous ?”

“ I am in sooth the bearer of a message on that subject,” said Gowrie, “ and crave your Majesty’s pardon for not having ere this delivered it. The Queen of England commanded me to assure your Majesty that she is right happy in having it in her power to contribute to the amusement of your Majesties ; and that a company of comedians shall be dispatched toward Edinburgh as soon as they can complete their necessary equipments.”

The Queen, passionately fond of public exhibitions, heard this with delight.

“ Know you, my Lord,” said she, “ if that same Shakspeare, the reading of whose

plays hath given us so much satisfaction, cometh with them ?”

“In this matter,” replied the Earl, “I cannot satisfy your Majesty ; his absence, however, may be the less regretted, as his performance falleth so far short of the admirable characters he hath conceived, that the Ghost, in his own play of Hamlet, is among the most important of those he enacts.”

“I have heard,” remarked his Majesty, “that his education was not classical, at whilk I couldna but admire, having supposed him a right erudite scholar.”

“May I take the liberty of inquiring which of his plays your Majesty most approves?” said the Earl.

“Methinks,” said his Majesty, fixing his eyes upon the Queen, “that the humours o’ Petruchio, and his art in bringing that high spirited dame o’ his under ~~the~~ dominion o’ that controul sae properly set furth in her concluding speech, gied us the maist contentment.”

The quick blood mounted instantly to

the cheeks of the Queen, and she replied contemptuously, " I think very differently ; the woman only confesseth the slavish weakness of a spirit broken by the brutal force of her losel husband ; and we hope there are but few such fools."

" Fool will ye her?" said his Majesty with vehemence ; " then deil hae me, but I wish a' the wives in our dominions were such, beginning even at the tapmost branch o' the tree."—Then motioning the Master of Ruthven toward him, he took him by the arm, and, without waiting her Majesty's reply, drew him to a considerable distance, and began to discourse on the time and place of the next day's hunt.

The Earl of Gowrie, meantime, not being accustomed, like the other courtiers, to these royal bickerings, was somewhat astounded with what appeared the evil effects of the subject he had unfortunately broached, but not liking to discontinue it too abruptly, he spoke of the general admiration excited by " As you Like it," just then

produced from the pen of the same author ; and, at the request of the Queen, repeated some of the most beautiful and striking parts, which his refined and correct taste, joined with the finely modulated tones of his voice, rendered a gratification of so delightful and novel a nature to her Majesty, and all around her, that every trace of any thing less harmonious, passed off from their minds.

But in this courtly circle of admiring listeners, none seemed to feel so deeply the nature and pathos of the quotation made by the Earl, as the Lady Agnes Somerdale, who, no longer requiring the hand of her friend Beatrix to draw her forth, fixed her eyes with profound attention on the speaker, while her own countenance exhibited in its varying features how completely she entered into the spirit of the author, and how enthusiastically sensible she was of the reciter's powers. But no sooner had he ceased to speak, and had again bent his eyes exclusively on herself, than she shrunk back

from the station she occupied, covered with confusion for having so far forgotten the usual reserve of her nature, as to have rendered herself and her feelings so conspicuous; while Gowrie, unaccustomed to meet with such retiring modesty in a court beauty, looked on her with wonder, and was no sooner alone with his brother, than he eagerly questioned him concerning her.

“ Ah ! my dear brother,” said the Master, “ cast not, I beseech you, your admiring eyes on that fair damsel, for she is guarded by all the saints in the Romish calendar, who will, without doubt, avenge her upon that bold heretic who shall attempt her coy little heart.”

“ You do not mean to say she is a Romanist ?” said the Earl, with an unconscious look of dismay.

“ Even so,” replied the Master, “ and a bigotted one too, in as far as the most obstinate faith in her own creed goes ; at least so sayeth our sister Beatrix, from whom cometh my information, and who tells me

that her faith hath been assailed in vain by some of our most eloquent and zealous divines ; for although the very soul of mildness, she exhibits an unparalleled firmness when her belief is attacked, that distances all argument and persuasion."

" Who is she ?" demanded Gowrie ; " for I have not yet heard her family name."

" She is the daughter of the late Lord Somerdale," replied his brother ; " you must have met with her uncle, the present Lord, at the Court of France, as he is now there."

" I know him well," replied Gowrie ; " but you surprise me, for he is one of the most staunch upholders of the reformed kirk."

" And so was her father," replied the Master ; " but the mother of this lady was no upholder of the kirk, but a staunch Papist."

" Ah ! then," returned the Earl, " she has imbued the mind of her daughter with her own errors ! How can any man, whose understanding is enlightened by the Gospel of Truth, be so infatuated as to marry a

woman who may thus continue the darkness of idolatry in his own offspring ?”

“ Nay, he must be as blind as the little God who influences him,” replied the gay Ruthven ; “ but we all know, or at least have heard too much of his arbitrary power, to wonder at a man’s sacrificing every thing to her, whose beauty and attractions were so unrivalled, as I understand were those of Lady Somerdale.”

“ I cannot conceive a more beautiful or attractive being than her daughter,” said Gowrie ; “ yet I should think the man worse than mad who, himself a Protestant, could forget all the claims of his faith, and make her his wife.”

“ In sooth,” returned his brother, “ I earnestly pray that no temptation of the kind may be thrown in my path, lest I should speak less confidently on the subject ; but thanks to my stars, the Lady Agnes is too reserved and melancholy a damsel to attract my volatile regards ; no ! I shall assuredly never fall in love with

Melpomene; it must be some gay Thalia that presents the temptation that is to combat my prudence."

"I trust," said the Earl, seriously, "that though you talk thus lightly, my dear Alexander, you will be as loath to forfeit your character for prudence as I shall be.—But tell me how Lady Agnes Somerdale came to be selected by the Queen as one of her ladies; for in the short time I have yet had to study her Majesty's humour, it appeareth to me that she cannot have acted from any great sympathy with the feelings of one so serious as you describe her charming attendant."

"No, no," answered Ruthven, "her Majesty, like myself, is too fond of gaiety to have made choice of one who ever seems to repel it. But the mother of Lady Agnes, you are to know, having designed her for a clister, tried her death-bed influence on her husband to persuade him to sanction her wish, which, however, proved vain; and just before his own death, which happened about

six months past, he made his brother, the present Lord, promise to place his daughter under the protection of the Queen, to prevent the possibility of her mother's sister, who is Superior of a convent at Rome, from getting her into her power, which it seems she had attempted even in the lifetime of her father. He likewise made his brother promise, that every expedient should be tried to wean her from her erroneous faith, which, as I before repeated, hath proved hitherto fruitless; and now, my dear Gowrie, you have all the information I can give, except that she hath, I think, bewitched our sister Beatrix, who, despite their constitutional dissimilarity, vows she never loved any one so well." Thus ended the conversation of the brothers; and here we conclude this chapter.

CHAPTER X.

He was perfum'd like a milliner,
And twist his finger and his thumb he held
A pointed box, which ever and anon
He gave his nose, and took't away again.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE beauty and amiable qualities of Lady Agnes Somerdale were of that kind which gain so much on the heart and understanding by being frequently contemplated, that it was no matter of surprise, if, after their having once made the forcible impression on the Earl of Gowrie, described in the last chapter, they were unconsciously the cause that he became domesticated in the royal circle, where only she was to be seen. And the manners of the Scottish Court during the period of which we are writing, placing the nobles, and all the men

of family who possessed influence or wealth, much more on a footing of social intercourse with royalty, than the etiquette of courts in the present day would sanction, it was not remarked as any thing uncommon, that the Earl was so frequently an inmate of her Majesty's private apartments, and admitted to where she and her ladies amused themselves in various employments. This was a comparatively small chamber, in furnishing which Anne had given way to her taste for luxury and magnificence. The walls were covered with the richest tapestry from the looms of Arras, on which was depicted the story of the Captive Chryseis, from the Iliad, which was divided into several portions, to suit the compartments formed by three Venetian mirrors. At the upper part of this room was placed a chair of state, surmounted by a canopy of cloth of silver, lined with azure satin, long draperies from which were upheld by two alabaster Cupids standing on pedestals, one on each side of the throne, who peeped forth at each other

as if playing at hide-and-seek in their folds. Before the chair stood a table of about three feet square, which came originally from Mexico, and was a present to her Majesty from the King of Spain, brought over by one of those private ambassadors, who, as she was ever a firm friend to their master, always found favour in her sight. It was of rich mosaic work, formed of the feathers of small birds, extremely valuable on account of the beauty of their plumage, and curiously inlaid round the edge with gold and ivory. "Some Indians," says a Spanish historian, "who are able artists, execute this sort of work so perfectly, that they imitate the best painters of Spain; and what neither the pencil nor the colours in painting can effect, they have done." This table was usually covered with blue satin, richly embroidered with a deep border of silver tissue. To the right and left of the chair, at some little distance, were two small recesses containing figures of nymphs, of Ita-

lian sculpture, bearing on their heads small tablets, on each of which stood a large vase of massy gold, containing powerful perfumes, that had been presented at the christening of Prince Henry, by the ambassadors of the States of Holland. The floor, and three steps which raised that part of the room on which the chair of state stood, were covered with a Persian carpet, of rich and vivid colours. Chairs, stools, and tables, with innumerable moveable cushions, stuffed with eider down, (incredible quantities of which were at that time brought to Denmark from the King's Icelandic dominions,) filled up the lower part of this apartment, which was also furnished with musical instruments. There was likewise a store of embroidering-frames, and other implements for ladies' work, by which they found means in those days, as well as the present, to be laboriously idle. In short, the Queen had collected in this favourite apartment all that could delight the eye, or gratify the senses ; yet, gorgeous and luxurious as it was, the

ponderously heavy cornices, and the narrow windows, with their deep recesses, gave it still an appearance of gloom.

It was in this room, into which the Earl of Gowrie was one day admitted, that he found the Queen, with Agnes, Beatrix, and his brother. The Ladies Agnes and Beatrix were engaged at their embroidering-frames in separate windows, while her Majesty, seated in the chair of state, appeared busily employed in arranging some jewels, taken from cases that stood on the table before her, and to which the Master of Ruthven, who had been excused that day from his attendance in the hunting field, in consequence of having sprained his arm, seemed also to be giving his attention.

Her Majesty raised her head immediately on the Earl's entrance.—“Come hither, my Lord of Gowrie,” she said, “and give us your assistance. The Master hath been directing me how to form a carcanet of jewels from our hoards, which shall, from the rare qualities contained in each, have

power to protect us from all imaginable evils, and endow us with all manner of virtues—Nay, now,” she continued, “you smile somewhat maliciously, my lord, methinks as though you doubted the power of our gems to accomplish such marvels ; but we are determined to put our plan in execution, and, as soon as we have arranged these stones, to deliver them to George Heriot, our cunning workman, that we may, as soon as possible, become possessed of this charmed necklace, expecting it to vie with the most famous talisman of the East ; therefore, no more of those incredulous smiles, I beseech you.”

“ Your Majesty may rest assured,” said the Earl, “ that no one of your faithful subjects can more fervently wish that their spells may prove potent to protect your Grace from every approach of calamity. Nor am I ignorant of the vast importance attached to their qualities, as thus expressed by a learned lapidary,—

‘ That, by heavenly influence,
Each precious pearl and stone
Hath in his substance fixed force
And virtues largely sown.’ ”

“ Proceed we then,” said the Queen, who, it is more than probable, partook largely in the belief of most of the fanciful theories of the time,—“ Proceed we then to finish our task—This is an agate,—what sayeth the Master are its peculiar properties ?”

“ It is most inestimable,” said Ruthven —“ it maketh eloquent, and procureth the favour of princes, and also protects him who weareth it from dangers of storm and tempest, by sea and land.”

“ Ah !” said her Majesty, laughing, “ I will have some of monstrous size procured, to bestow upon our consort for behoof of his many ambassadors.—And this,” she continued, taking another stone from one of the cases, and holding it up—“ what have you to say for this ?”

“ The hyacinth—for such I think it is,” said the Master, taking it in his hand—

power to protect us from all imaginable evils, and endow us with all manner of virtues—Nay, now,” she continued, “you smile somewhat maliciously, my lord, methinks as though you doubted the power of our gems to accomplish such marvels ; but we are determined to put our plan in execution, and, as soon as we have arranged these stones, to deliver them to George Heriot, our cunning workman, that we may, as soon as possible, become possessed of this charmed necklace, expecting it to vie with the most famous talisman of the East ; therefore, no more of those incredulous smiles, I beseech you.”

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Hath in his substance fixed force
And virtues largely sown.’ ”

“ Proceed we then,” said the Queen, who, it is more than probable, partook largely in the belief of most of the fanciful theories of the time,—“ Proceed we then to finish our task—This is an agate,—what sayeth the Master are its peculiar properties ?”

“ It is most inestimable,” said Ruthven —“ it maketh eloquent, and procureth the favour of princes, and also protects him who weareth it from dangers of storm and tempest, by sea and land.”

“ Ah !” said her Majesty, laughing, “ I will have some of monstrous size procured, to bestow upon our consort for behoof of his many ambassadors.—And this,” she continued, taking another stone from one of the cases, and holding it up—“ what have you to say for this ?”

“ The hyacinth—for such I think it is,” said the Master, taking it in his hand—

“ prevents pestilential infection, and is a preservative from poison.”

“ And this sapphire ? ” inquired the Queen, after examining and passing several of the gems, — “ Come, good Ruthven, your task is nearly completed, for methinks this is the only stone you have not seen.”

“ Is your Majesty’s carcanet then of a reasonable length ? ” said Ruthven.

“ Why, yes,” replied her Majesty, after laying the stones side by side before her ; “ but we must assuredly add this for its beauty, though its other qualities should be inferior to those we have already selected.”

“ It hath many virtues,” returned the Master ; “ yet,” added he, gaily, “ can your Majesty stand in no need of its assistance, while those two living sapphires, your Majesty’s eyes, put to shame the lustre of the stone.”

There was more truth in this speech than is usually contained in compliments of the kind ; for the Queen’s eyes were of that beautiful blue, which well warranted the

comparison, nor could the gem exceed them in brightness ; and it may well be supposed that such appropriate flattery took nothing from their lustre,—on the contrary, they darted such orient beams of favour on the young man who had thus ventured to eulogize them, that his own sunk beneath them. The Earl felt surprised, and somewhat troubled ; much of his alarm arose from observing the free manner in which Ruthven dared to address the Queen, but more from the encouragement she gave him ; a still stronger instance of which, to his great dismay, he was about to witness.

Anne addressed herself immediately to the Earl.—“ Have you ever met, my lord,” said she, “ with one more skilled in subterfuge than this brother of thine ?—I have wearied him to death with this same carcanet, and now, refusing to lend me his assistance any longer, he puts me off with a compliment to my eyes.—Go,” she continued, playfully, to Ruthven, “ go—we cannot be deceived you see—Yet surely your

services deserve some reward.”—And, untying from her neck an embroidered ribband, to which a locket was suspended, she made a motion for him to stoop; he instantly kneeled, and she fastened it round his neck. The movement was instantaneous; and, almost before the Earl could persuade himself that what he had just witnessed was no deception of vision, his brother had risen, and devoutly kissed the ornament thus bestowed.

If the Earl felt amazed before, he was now perfectly lost in astonishment; and foreseeing the probable ill effects of such thoughtless indications of favour to so young a man, whom, as a brother, he tenderly loved, he determined to hazard the Queen’s displeasure, by urging what partook of the nature of a remonstrance.

“That young coxcomb, my gracious Queen,” said Gowrie, “is already nearly insufferable;—let me then most humbly entreat you to recall this most distinguishing mark of your royal favour, which, besides

increasing his vanity to an extravagant pitch, may possibly draw on him the hatred of those who conceive themselves more entitled to your gracious consideration."

The Queen looked at the Earl steadily for an instant, while her face and neck were suffused with a crimson glow.

The words of Gowrie were merely such as might have been spoken in that spirit of badinage of which she had set the example, but the seriousness and air of vexation with which they were uttered gave them, to her quick perception, the full meaning he wished them to convey, and she replied more to the expression of his countenance than to his language.

"We perceive, my lord," she said, "that you kindly mean to act as our monitor; we will, however, in future spare you that trouble, having arrived at what we ourself consider the years of discretion."

The Earl of Gowrie did all that he could to make his sentiments appear less legibly written in his features, but his strong disap-

probation of her conduct was too deeply seated to admit of its being so speedily effaced from his countenance, and it was in vain that he apologized for his zeal to prevent a shadow of blame from being cast upon her condescension.

“ If the Master of Ruthven agrees with your lordship,” she said, haughtily, “ in considering my gift so very dangerous, he has my full permission to destroy it as soon as he thinks meet—recall it I certainly shall not.”

Ruthven again pressed the locket to his lips, and swore solemnly that nothing on earth should make him part with it, but that, on the contrary, he would guard it with the last drop of his blood. The vehemence of his tone and action, and the looks of indignation he darted on his brother for wishing to deprive him of the locket, soothed the Queen ; for, delighted with this romantic fervour, which her vanity loved so well, she speedily regained her good humour, and turning to the Earl, she said, “ Let all this

folly be forgotten ; and prithee, Ruthven, call hither thy sister, who sits plying her needle yonder with as much diligence as though she were the wife of some burley yeoman, and had six small children to provide with warp and woof.—Do, dear Beatrix,” she continued, as the sister of Gowrie approached, “ take thy lute, and refresh me with its melody, for I am weary of these men and baubles ;” and she pushed pettishly from her the table on which the jewels were displayed.

“ Shall we retire,” said the Earl to the Master, “ lest we increase the weariness of which her Majesty complains ?”

“ Not so, good my lord, if it please you to remain,” said her Majesty, somewhat sharply ; “ we shall retain you till your sister’s melody hath chased away **all** your dark chimeras, and the honey-dew of peace descend once more upon your **justly** troubled spirit.”

This was pronounced in such a satirical tone, and accompanied by such an air of

mock gravity, that the Earl could not avoid smiling, though inwardly provoked by her thoughtless levity ; he bowed however, in acquiescence.

“ Go, I beseech you, my dear brother,” said Lady Beatrix to the Earl, “ and warn my friend Agnes that I am summoned from the race her fair fingers have been striving to win with mine for some two hours past.”

“ Recollect, however, my lord,” said the Queen, “ we do not require her attendance, should she be disposed to continue her employment.”—For her Majesty seldom felt any wish for the presence of one whose manners were a tacit rebuke to her own.

The Earl having received this commission, so congenial to his wish, gladly proceeded to the foot of the room, where Agnes, enshrined between the splendid curtains, sat in the deep recess of a window, intent on arranging the different shades of silk, so as to suit the fairy creations of her fancy.

The Queen, on Gowrie's departure, followed him with a glance, in which there was much of admiration, mixed with apparent pique. "Now, for my life, can I not imagine," said she, addressing Ruthven and his sister, "what can tempt that noble Earl to assume these airs of solemn wisdom.—Dost know, my Beatrix, that he seemed to consider it his bounden duty even now to reprove our folly for bestowing that bauble which hangs about the Master's neck :—we havenot been so schooled, God wot, since first we came from Denmark, when Sir James Melville was appointed our nursing father and keeper by our royal consort, who thought his bride too young to go alone ; yet, by our faith it was a thankless office, and we would not advise those who value our good graces to emulate his homilies."—And, roused by these seemingly unpleasant reflections, her eyes flashed resentment as she spoke.

Ruthven, whose heart smote him for having partaken so much in her feelings to-

wards his brother as he had done, could not now any longer endure to hear him censured, and said with energy, but with an aspect of the deepest respect,—“ Oh, your Majesty knows not my excellent brother, and the loyalty of his noble heart toward his Queen, and how deeply it will grieve him should his offence be remembered by her ! Let me therefore entreat your Majesty to think of it no more, save as the overflowings of his love toward me, his brother, whom he perchance considers as the young eaglet, still too weak to look upon the full meridian sun, and who, soaring a pitch too high, may be dazzled by its brightness, and hurled to earth with lacerated wing.”

“ Gramercy !” said her Majesty, with an arch and penetrating smile, “ our wit is much too dull of comprehension for these bright metaphors, though our womanly instinct hath discovered some sacrifice, intended to gratify our vanity, and appease our kindling wrath ;—be it, then, as thou hast said.”

Ruthven and Beatrix were both eloquent in their thanks ; and she proceeded, in high good humour, “ I prithee, Ruthven, remove from my sight that odious trinket of thine, and never let it meet mine eyes again.”

This could only be done, of course, by taking it from his neck, or hiding it within his vest ; the former he had sworn never to do, nor could it have been so rudely displaced, according to the most common rules of gallantry. There remained, therefore, but one alternative, and it was immediately placed next his heart.

“ Let me lose all but this,” said he, placing his hand above it, “ and I shall still be rich.”

“ Hush ! hush !” said the Queen ; “ behold your Argus yonder hath turned his eyes upon you, which, by our faith, we think have concentrated in them the powers of the whole hundred given to his prototype ; but I had forgot,” she added with a smile,

“ I have done ; and now, Beatrix, sing me one of my native ballads from ‘ The Kaimpe Viser.’ ”

These were heroic songs, collected by order of Anne’s mother, Sophia, Queen of Denmark, a few years previous to this period, and of which she was extremely fond. Anne had all her mother’s partiality for these wild and romantic legends of antiquity, and sat frequently for hours listening to them, when sung for her amusement by the ladies of her court.

The Lady Beatrix took her lute, and placing a cushion at the Queen’s feet, sat down on it, and prepared to begin her song. Her purpose was, however, delayed, by the entrance of several of her Majesty’s ladies in waiting, among whom was the Duchess of Lennox, who occasionally attended on the Queen at Holyrood, and who, on entering, said something to Beatrix, which appearing to occasion her much amusement, her Majesty inquired the cause.

“ I was only informing my sister, please your Majesty,” said the Duchess, “ that I have just overheard, as I crossed the great gallery, a lover of hers rehearsing some verses, in which her name occurred at least ten times before he was aware that I was a listener ; and so wrapt and moon-struck did he seem, that I fear me, if he is not speedily cured of this most sore disease, it were less than safe to trust him with the cure of others.”

“ Oh !” replied Anne, “ if it is Herbal of whom you speak, I declare it nothing short of treason against our mirth, to attempt the reformation of that thrice renowned ass ; for by this light, since he hath entertained this love-sick fancy, he is the most amusing fool we ever looked upon ; and being even now in the humour for such pastime, I will have him here upon the instant. Go, Ruthven, and tell him we command his attendance.—Now,” said Anne, “ let not the Lady Beatrix disappoint our

frolic ; for presumption such as his deserves no mercy at her hands."

If the look which Beatrix gave her Majesty in reply to this might be trusted, it promised not to spare him, but she spoke not ; for at that instant, he entered with Ruthven. He was a little man, apparently near forty, whose yellow meagre face, and uncommonly small head, seemed as if by some mistake to be placed upon a square-built body, that would itself have been no way disproportioned to a man a foot and a half taller. One of his legs was stout and thick, in conformity to the size of his body, while the other appeared as if cast in the same mould to which his head had belonged, for it was thin and shrivelled, and from a contraction in the tendons of the heel, caused a halt in his gait. Notwithstanding these disadvantages of person, he was dressed in the very extremity of the most absurd fashion of the day ; and from a certain assurance in the gaze of his small black eyes,

and the air of outward confidence diffused over his whole person, the spectator at once felt convinced that he was conscious of no defect, but that, on the contrary, he was a vain man, and valued himself not a little on account of some imaginary perfection.

Now the truth was, that Doctor Hugh Herbal, physician in ordinary to his Majesty, did seriously and solemnly believe, that no other man of his day was possessed of superior technical knowledge, or equal genius and sagacity in detecting the symptoms and pointing out the remedies for every disease under the sun. Fortunately for himself, he had persuaded his Majesty to be much of the same opinion, which he had accomplished partly by his pedantic jargon, and by being possessed of a thorough knowledge of the Latin language—a quality which enhanced his value much in the King's estimation ; yet he was perhaps still more beholden to his adroitness, in constantly affirming that his royal master promoted his health by all those exercises

to which he was attached, no matter how intemperately pursued ; as likewise by his commendations of the nutritious qualities of those sweet wines, to the use of which the King was so profusely addicted, and which some of his Majesty's more honest physicians had thought it their duty to hint, were prejudicial to his constitution. Thus, by acquiescing in all the tastes of James, who was ever childishly impatient of whatsoever thwarted his inclinations, he became so necessary to him, and so much in favour, that no one about the court ventured to attack him, save under the patronage of the Queen. She seeing through his character, and despising it, sometimes drew from his peculiarities amusement for herself and her attendants, although his vanity kept him from perceiving it, and made him feel flattered by what he considered her particular notice.

This person, such as he has been described, now advanced up the room toward her Majesty, with a simper of conscious

satisfaction upon his sallow features ; and casting an affected glance of admiration toward Lady Beatrix, who had began to play and sing, he approached the Queen with an humble obeisance, who returned it by a slight inclination of her head, and motion of her hand toward the fair songstress, as intimating, that she was attending to her, and did not choose to be disturbed. Herbal, on this sign, withdrew to some distance from her person, fixing his eyes on Lady Beatrix, while he beat time to her song with the fingers of one hand, on a splendid box, which contained a costly perfume, and which he held so slightly in the other, as to exhibit a beautiful painting in enamel, set with brilliants ; while his eyes were ever and anon cast up with a mawkish affectation of rapture, which seemed exceedingly to delight the spectators. The sound of the lute had no sooner ceased, than he addressed Lady Beatrix in the most florid style of compliment ; to which she replied, with downcast eyes, and a well dissembled ap-

pearance of gratification, which raising his hopes, would have induced him to continue his gallantry, had she not reminded him that he had been sent for by her Majesty.

“ Now, Ruthven,” said the Queen, “ Herbal shall in our presence pronounce upon the injury your arm hath sustained ; for, Heaven forgive us, if we have wrongfully suspected thee of wishing to raise the compassion of our fair ladies, by a stratagem which maketh thee so helplessly interesting, and also displayeth to such advantage the curious embroidery of that scarf that supporteth it withal.”

“ Your Majesty will, I trust, be convinced that you have done me wrong,” said Ruthven, “ when Doctor Herbal shall make his report upon my arm.”

“ Meanwhile let me look upon that painting, good Herbal,” said the Queen, “ which thou holdest in thine hand.”

Doctor Herbal immediately delivered the box to her Majesty, with one of those contortions of his body, which he imagined a

graceful bow. The miniature on its lid was that of an uncommonly beautiful woman, in the bloom of youth. After her Majesty had looked on it for some time, she called on her ladies to admire it, while Herbal examined Ruthven's hand, which appeared considerably swelled.

"I must be so bold," said Herbal, "as to remark, that your Majesty's suspicions have, indeed, done the Master of Ruthven less than justice; for this has really," he continued, as he held the wrist on which he was about to lecture exposed to view, "been a severe sprain. The extension of the ligaments about the carpus is so great, that the radius and metacarpus are become"——

"Now, beshrew my heart," interrupted the Queen, "if thou beginnest with thine unintelligible gibberish, it were but lost labour to listen to thee, therefore no more; we trust thy skill to devise such remedies as shall bring relief to the Master.—Meanwhile, I am impatient to learn whose likeness this is, that formeth, as we think, the

principal adornment of this costly box ; or is she but the creature of the painter's fancy ?”

“ She was no imaginary being, so please your Highness,” said Herbal, with an air of conscious triumph, “ but one that was more beaucous still than she is represented.”

“ Was !” repeated her Majesty ; “ is she then dead ? or hath the ruthless hand of time defaced these matchless features ? But I forget me ; so young a man as thou could not in the latter case have vouched the resemblance ; and, perhaps,” she continued as she read in his countenance a hypocritical expression of sorrow, mingled with what she construed into an eagerness to be interrogated on the subject,—“ perhaps we ought not to question you too closely lest she was some lady-love of thine, whose loss you still deplore ! Speak !—Was it so ?”

“ Gratitude for the good opinion so fair a creature deigned to entertain of my unworthy self, could not but leave some dreg of grief behind, though not exactly of the

nature which your Majesty hath seemed to hint," replied Herbal.

"What!" said the Queen; while the eyes of Herbal being turned on the ground prevented him from observing the look of unutterable derision with which she surveyed his grotesque figure—"What! you do not mean to imply that you were so cruel as not to return the regard of the unfortunate beauty?"

"Affection, as your Majesty knoweth," he replied, "cannot be forced. It was therefore no crime of mine if I felt nought but respect for one that filled all other hearts with love."

"Barbarous savage!" said the Queen, affecting the utmost indignation, while the laugh she could scarce control slightly convulsed the corners of her mouth, and was seen dancing in her large blue eyes. "It is probable then that you suffered so sweet a creature to die for love of you—take your box, I cannot pardon thee, or look again on it."

“Nay,” replied Herbal, “your Majesty is too severe upon me; I said not so—the lady died—but God forefend her death should lie at my door! She was a foreigner, and I so young a man when we met abroad, that it would have been but madness to have thought of marriage; and yet, alas! no heart is softer than the one I bear!” And laying his hand on his breast, he looked conceitedly toward the Lady Beatrix, and sighed profoundly.

The Lady Beatrix turned her head, and whispered to the Duchess of Lennox—
“Now could I spit at him, did I not hope for better revenge.”

“Nay, Herbal,” said her Majesty, with impenetrable gravity, “as I hope for peace, will I not have these dangerous sighs wafted toward our damsels, lest some one of them should share the fate of that poor maiden we have just been pitying. Therefore, I command thee to marry, for thou hast not now thy extreme youth to plead: and shouldest thou choose a wife from this

fair throng, I promise thee a merry wedding.—What say you, ladies, shall we not be gay?”

“Were all these ladies of my mind,” said Lady Beatrix, “then would your Majesty’s considerate care have little to apprehend for us from sighs, and such like ambassadors of flimsy love as silken knights employ.”

“Gramercy,” replied Anne, with well-feigned surprise, “I pray thee what might then suffice?”

“O,” returned the Lady Beatrix, “I could never bestow myself upon the man who only proved his love by sighs.” And she continued, darting a look full of penetrating and comic expression at the attentive Herbal, “He who wins my favour must be able to conquer with his sword all others who contend for it,—he must be perfect in martial exercises, and the management of his steed; for even his springing on him without assistance from the stirrup, though I confess it but a common feat, hath more charm for

my heart, than all the sighs that he could breathe, although his throat should emulate the cave of Æolus.—I should like him, too, to figure in the grave and graceful dance—and he must be a learned man, and if he had the genius of a poet to celebrate my perfections, so much the better, for then would they be handed down to posterity,—these are the qualities that I most dearly prize, and the only ones that will ever make an impression on my affections.”

Her Majesty was much diverted by this list of perfections, many of which were totally unattainable by Herbal,—and by the perplexed air with which he heard them enumerated.

“ Now I have said my say,” continued the young lady, “ is my determination approved by your Majesty and these ladies?”

Anne and her ladies acquiesced most heartily in her ideas of the proper qualities of a lover. “ And certes,” said the Queen, “ that man were not worthy of your favour,

who, being deficient in any of these qualifications, set not himself to acquire them."

"Nay, that is for his consideration," said Beatrix; "but my determination is fixed as fate."

The grimaces that accompanied a low bow, made by Herbal at this juncture, to Lady Beatrix, so nearly overset the gravity of the scene, that one instant more, and even the blinded and egregious vanity of Herbal must have discovered that he was made the butt of the circle; Ruthven, however, perceived the danger, and having no inclination to lose the amusement he still expected from this vain coxcomb, pretended a sudden pain in his wrist, and craving the Queen's permission for his attendance, took him by the arm and hurried him out of the apartment. They had no sooner disappeared, than a burst of laughter echoed through the room.

"Thou hast performed thy part to a miracle, my girl," said the Queen to Lady Beatrix, "and hast sent that stupid fool to

practise as many absurdities, as a show-man teacheth his ape ; and may heaven increase his folly, that so our mirth may profit by the occasion !" During this scene, the Earl of Gowrie remained standing by the Lady Agnes. The conversation which engrossed them, and prevented their attending to what was passing in the room, shall be recorded in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XI.

Good Sir John, as you have one eye upon my follies, turn another into the register of your own, that I may pass with a reproof the easier.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE Lady Agnes remained busily employed with her work, as we have before said, during the whole of the time that the scene recorded in the last chapter was passing. For, taking little interest in the scenes of giddy levity, in which the Queen delighted, she was at all times happy in an opportunity of escaping from them, that she might commune with her own thoughts; for, brought up in solitude with a mother, whose delicate health and depressed spirits allowed not of her mixing with the world, there was in her disposition an almost in-

fantine innocence, joined with a seriousness of reflection, a depth of understanding, and a firmness of purpose, very uncommon at her years. Much of this she owed, perhaps, to the persecutions on account of her religion, which she endured from her father. Having from this cause never known happiness at that early period which nature seems to set apart for its enjoyment, if there was engendered in her mind any youthful tincture of romance, it was that high-minded heroism which taught her to bear any species of misfortune, rather than by sacrificing the slightest duty seek to avoid it.

A character like hers could not easily be developed to those with whom she now associated ; but Gowrie had penetrated it, for it was too congenial to his own to escape his perception. His father's violent death, and the broken-hearted recollections of his surviving parent—which ever dwelt upon the dishonoured grave of her murdered husband, where there was nought to soften the pangs of memory—had made an early im-

pression on his naturally serious disposition and feeling heart ; and taking from his boyhood the buoyancy of youth, had tintured his mind and habits, as he grew to manhood, with a dignity and gravity which are seldom met with in so young a man. Agnes appeared to Gowrie so much the being created for his happiness, that he could not help secretly indulging a hope, that she might one day change that faith, which now seemed the only insurmountable bar to their union ; for he perceived, with satisfaction, the preference which her artless manners made it visible she entertained for his society, when contrasted with the degree of attention she bestowed on those admirers whom her beauty alone attracted. And indeed he considered her heart as safe from the contagion of such love, as if she had not possessed one capable of feeling the passion.

Among her lovers, there was, however, one, who brooked not tamely this indiffer-

ence, and who already had begun to hate the Earl, as one to whom she gave that attention denied to himself. This young man was John Rathsay, a cadet of the ancient and honourable family of Daldomus, who attended on his Majesty as his page. Deeply smitten with the charms of Lady Agnes, although a Protestant, he felt no reluctance to marry a Catholic ; nor, in following the headstrong passion with which she had inspired him, did he see any thing detrimental to the ambition which had hitherto been the star by which he steered his course ; for she was, as well as himself, of an ancient family, and the heiress of ample estates.

Till the arrival of the Earl of Gowrie, although his own attentions had not been received in the manner he wished, yet his utmost vigilance had not been able to detect, in the slightest instance, any appearance of superior attention toward the other candidates for her favour. But now her conduct seemed to him to be changed ; for

no sooner did the Earl appear, than she smiled upon him, and attended to his conversation with an apparent sensation of pleasure, which he had never observed her display when addressed by any other man. Nor did she shun those little attentions of gallantry, when offered by the Earl, which she was wont to avoid, when tendered by himself or others. All these things did he narrowly observe, with the jaundiced eye of jealousy, and construe into "confirmation strong," that Gowrie was his favoured rival. Nor did it cause him slight uneasiness to learn, that the Earl was so frequent a guest of the Queen, during those hours when his own office obliged him to be in attendance on his Majesty. Magnifying the danger to himself, from these interviews, and stung with her seeming preference of the Earl, it was with vexation and rage that he perceived him and his family, as it were surrounding the throne, and becoming the prime objects of favour with a Monarch so easily swayed, and with a Queen whose im-

perious temper necessarily exercised, over her weaker-minded consort, a considerable ascendancy. Besides all this, he beheld, with no small touch of envy, the superior acquirements of Gowrie, and that elegance of manner, which was partly the result of natural disposition, and partly of his intercourse with courts and countries in which refinement had made a greater progress than in Scotland, where the turbulent manners of its nobles had only just begun to soften into some degree of civilization ; for if the short reign of the unfortunate Mary had introduced the more polished manners and customs of France, they were quickly forgotten in the fierce contests to which her reign had given rise ; nor did they probably ever extend far beyond the limits of her own immediate presence.

Thus the Earl of Gowrie was a bright and solitary star in that horizon, which was still overclouded by barbarism ; nor was there any one of all the lesser host likely to arise in competition with him, except his

brother, the Master of Ruthven, whose volatile, though noble, brave, and generous mind, was daily modelling itself by almost imperceptible degrees on that of the Earl, who appeared to him to have attained the summit of human perfection. Naturally proud, fierce, and ambitious, Rathsay thus beheld his path crossed by one who seemed, almost without an effort, to be in a fair way of reaping all those advantages which it had cost him so much pains and forecast to contrive the means of possessing; and his haughty spirit rebelled at the prospect. His office, which made him a constant attendant on the King's person, gave him, however, one advantage over his rival—in the constant possession of his ear; which circumstance he determined to turn to his own advantage, by endeavouring, as far as in him lay, to possess his Majesty with the same dislike of Gowrie which he felt himself.

Meanwhile the Earl, strong in the rectitude of his own principles, never so much

as harboured the most distant idea, that he was the object of aversion, not only to Rathsay, but to many others, who deemed that he might be the ultimate cause of hiding from them the beams of Majesty,—held on his upright course, nor troubled himself to conjecture what might be the sentiments which his own superior advantages had given rise to in those around him. Agnes was, however, more quick-sighted, and perceived with uneasiness the angry glances cast toward him by Rathsay, and how generally he appeared the cause of envious observation to almost all who felt his superiority. She too felt it; and the strong perception of a character so different from those which surrounded her, and which raised in her mind such exalted ideas of his manly virtues, was fast undermining the indifference she had hitherto felt for his sex. But it was so natural for her to feel sympathy with what was great and noble, that she had not hitherto taxed herself with being governed by any nearer interest, or once even dream-

ed that she could be in any danger of feeling an exclusive predilection for one, who, whatever his perfections might be, was still a heretic, with whom all her recollections, and all her principles, were at variance. Her mind was, however, somewhat enlightened on this subject, when she reflected on what had passed between her and Gowrie, in the conversation we promised, at the end of the last chapter, to repeat, and which had stamped indelible impressions on the minds of both. When Gowrie quitted the Queen, to repair, at his sister's desire, with her message to Lady Agnes, he still strongly felt the disapprobation, the expression of which had offended her Majesty so much ; yet he might not perhaps have mentioned the subject to Agnes, had he not so much approved the dignified reserve of her manner, so forcibly contrasted with all he observed in the circle in which Beatrix moved. He therefore seized this as a suitable opportunity to beseech her to counsel his sister, who, partaking much in the dis-

position of her brother Alexander, was volatile and giddy, and consequently very unfit to be under the control of a royal mistress, who never hesitated to gratify her gay and thoughtless inclinations at the expence of prudence ; and whose levity frequently approached the utmost bounds of virtue. This was a dangerous situation for any young woman not gifted with uncommon firmness ; and Gowrie would not have hesitated to remove Lady Beatrix from it immediately, had this been possible ; but it could not be done without assigning a sufficient reason ; and excepting the real one, which, of course, could not be given, there was not one which he could suggest that had even a shadow of plausibility. Besides this, he wished much to encourage the intimacy between Beatrix and Agnes, which must have been greatly retarded by their separation.

He therefore related as much of the affair of the locket, and of the conversation

which had just passed, as served to mark his disapprobation of the whole. Agnes felt particularly surprised at hearing of the Queen's gift to Ruthven. She recollected that her Majesty had said that the locket had been among the jewels given her by the King on her marriage, and that he had appeared to prize it more than those of much greater value, having himself discovered the amethyst which formed its centre on Salisbury Crags; and which he had caused to be surrounded with the largest pearls from the river Ythan, and set in Scottish gold. This, however, she concealed from Gowrie, being anxious not to increase his uneasiness, which the knowledge of such a circumstance must inevitably have done. She therefore only hinted that his influence with the Master, which was evidently great, might avail to prevent the evil consequences he appeared to dread; and added, that her own influence with Lady Beatrix should be exerted to attain the same end. For if she could bring her to see this

thoughtless act of the Queen's in the same light in which she viewed it herself, her advice might have more effect on the Master, than if given by those whom he considered as more fastidious.

"And," said she, "I have no doubt of being able to convince her of its impropriety; for Beatrix, though of that disposition, which stimulates to mirth and frolic, is yet ever amenable to more sober recollection."

"And yet," returned the Earl, "I cannot help feeling sorry that she so frequently gives the reins to her mirthful disposition, which I fear has at times the effect of wounding the feelings of those unfortunately subjected to the lash of her reckless wit. —And even at this moment," he continued, as he cast a glance toward the upper end of the apartment, "if I mistake not, poor Herbal is passing through an ordeal of this nature, for I observe that Beatrix never loses an opportunity of holding him up to ridicule."

"Nay," said Agnes, "in my poor opi-

nion, my lord, your sister hardly deserves censure on his account ; for his attentions to her have been so troublesome, and his vanity is so incorrigible, that he richly deserves mortification at her hands ; which, after all, she can scarcely inflict, for he persists in taking all her slights for favours ; and, though she plays off the solemn coxcomb till the ridicule is apparent to every one, he is too well protected from her slings and arrows by his shield of vanity to perceive it himself."

" But were it not as well to treat with silent contempt the attentions she complains of ?" returned the Earl. " I am inclined to think this would be the conduct pursued by you in similar circumstances. And, forgive me, when I say I have frequently admired the dignity and sweetness with which I have seen you repel similar attentions."

This tribute of praise from the Earl, highly as Agnes valued his opinion, could not but be most gratifying ; but she re-

plied, " Indeed, my lord, it would be most unfair, were I to admit of any comparisons between myself and my friend, circumstanced as I am ; to say nothing of the difference of disposition with which nature appears to have endowed us."

" The Lady Agnes will pardon me," said the Earl, " for confessing myself totally ignorant of her meaning, and for expressing a wish to understand what she has now said, which I entreat her to attribute to the interest I feel in all that concerns her."

Agnes felt confused and distressed by this speech, for it was not her wish to occupy his attention by speaking of herself ; and she thought her friendless and orphan situation, and her persecuted religion, were such obvious checks on lightness of heart, that her meaning would not have required any further explanation. She therefore paused and hesitated, but at length said,—
" You are not ignorant, I presume, my lord, that the religious faith which I hold is at

variance with that now established in this kingdom, and that, in being debarred from practising its rites and ceremonies, I am also prevented from seeking the counsels of a spiritual guide, which weighs the more heavily on my mind, as I have lost that tender parent, who was wont to be my adviser."

"Alas! that you, lady," said Gowrie, "should unfortunately not perceive the simplicity and purity of that religion which substitutes the homage of the heart for rites and ceremonies!"

"And can you, my lord," said Agnes, raising her head, and fixing on him a look of indignant sorrow, "think so meanly of my faith, as to imagine it a cold round of ceremonies? and that the deepest feelings of the heart are excluded from it? Oh! how much deceived you are!"

"I cannot be so far deceived, at least, dear lady," rejoined the Earl, "as to suppose it such to you; and I again beseech your forgiveness, if I have offended, by ex-

préssing a wish to see one so pure and lovely, embracing the genuine simplicity of Protestantism, or at least using the reason with which she is so eminently endowed in candidly examining its precepts. And, oh ! if you but knew the deep concern I feel on this subject, you would no longer wonder at my taking what you now must think an unwarrantable liberty."

Agnes, who, in the fervour of her own feelings, had continued to look at Gowrie while he thus addressed her, perceived him turn on her a regard of such admiration and tender interest, that its meaning could not escape her penetration. Her heart was softened, and she bent down her head to her work, to conceal her countenance from him, that he might not perceive what was passing in her mind ; for she had become suddenly enlightened with respect to his sentiments ; and feeling it her duty not to sanction in any degree hopes which he might form in regard to her future sentiments, she summoned all her fortitude to

crush them at once. And without appearing to understand the extent of the meaning his words and look had too fatally conveyed, she assured him, in a tone of the utmost gentleness, that she was not offended, and had a proper value for the kindness of the motive which induced him to speak on a subject that had nevertheless been but too often urged upon her already, as her determination was to live and die in the faith in which she had been educated ; and that so far from having a thought of wavering, she considered herself as devoted, by her mother's dying request, to a monastic life ; and that it was her earnest wish to obtain her uncle's permission to commence it immediately ; which she hoped to obtain, when he understood that she still remained firm to her principles, and that there was no prospect of her changing.

Gowrie was electrified by this information ; for, though informed by his brother of the wishes of her mother on this subject, he had never dreamt it was the purpose

of Agnes herself; and the idea of losing her for ever in the cloisters of a convent, banished the colour from his face, while it betrayed marks of strong agitation. It rendered him, however, eloquent in his endeavours to convince her, that she could never serve God so well as by continuing to practise her duty in a world, where examples of virtue were so necessary. But as it is not our intention to follow them through the mazes of religious controversy, we shall only say, that hitherto the resistance of Agnes against the objections urged in opposition to her faith, had been used to combat those, who, considering her firmness as obstinacy, and themselves and their lawful authority degraded by entering into controversy with a girl of her years, had unfortunately treated her understanding with contempt, and assumed a superiority by no means their due, had her powers of intellect been fairly weighed against their own. But the method of attack was now totally changed. From the Earl she met with liberality of

sentiment, and a just appreciation of her superior mind, joined with comprehension of her feelings, admiration of her pure motives, and an affectionate zeal for her happiness, which were highly soothing and acceptable to her ingenuous mind ; and while Gowrie spoke, she became half persuaded that a life of usefulness in the world, where there were acts of kindness to perform, and temptations to resist, must be as acceptable to her Maker, as the seclusion of a monastic life. It was not, therefore, till solitude had given her leisure to meditate on his words, and her own corresponding feelings, that she perceived, with humiliation and alarm, what she considered their deadly tendency, and resolved never again to listen to him on the subject of her faith. But if these meditations served to strengthen her prejudices, because they alarmed her vigilance, yet did Gowrie not suffer in her opinion for wishing that they might have but one religion ; nor did the utmost stretch of

her pious zeal so far obscure her natural good sense, as to persuade her that he who was an example of all that was noble and virtuous, would eventually be consigned to destruction, because he had been educated in that error which the frailty of nature at times almost tempted her to wish she had shared, rather than she should be parted from him for ever. And sometimes the struggle was so great between what she considered her duty, and the strong interest which Gowrie had acquired in her heart, that she seemed to behold herself on the edge of a precipice, where one step only appeared wanting to engulf her.

Nor were the sensations of Gowrie more enviable; for although keenly alive to all those ties which form the charm and zest of existence, and which, touching the springs of the affections, make the pulse to throb with kindly emotions, yet, as his heart had never till now been impelled toward such kindred excellence, it was at once his delight

to trace the similarity of taste in her to whom he was thus attracted ; and his torment to reflect, that she could not be his wife consistently with his own principles, and what he owed to those who looked up to him for example and assistance in support of the reformed religion. But such was the admiration he felt for the firm yet feminine character of Agnes, and the veneration with which he regarded the purity of her mind and motives, that he felt as it were afraid to urge any change that could wound the tender conscience of a creature who appeared to him equally a stranger to earthly passions and worldly views ; and who seemed already to belong exclusively to Heaven. And as her image, dedicated entirely to her Maker, rose to his view, he thought that one so young and pure must be, whatever the errors of her faith, a sacrifice not unacceptable to the Deity ; and that she could hardly remain in the world without contamination. In short, he thought he could almost resign her to this fate, as

a tender mother, who having herself experienced the troublesome turmoils of the world, does the babe, who being only lent her for a day, is straight returned to the bosom of its God. But these were only the more subdued feelings of his calmer moments, for there were times when it seemed impossible to give up all that he had ever fancied of happiness in his youthful visions of domestic bliss; and which, but for this one obstacle, might yet be realized.

There happened, however, about this time, a circumstance which tended, by a natural consequence, to shew him, had he before been ignorant of it, in what light his marrying a Catholic would be regarded by his countrymen.

The King, who was ever anxious to introduce Episcopal government, caused a General Assembly to meet at Montrose, to settle the election and powers of the representatives sent from the church to Parliament.

This town was chosen for the meeting,

because it was more likely to be attended by the northern clergy, among whom the King's interest particularly lay ; and he exerted all his influence, and gave it the weight of his own personal attendance, to secure to his measures a large majority. But the clergy of Edinburgh and its adjoining counties, so much dreaded that his Majesty would carry his purpose of again establishing the bishops, so abhorrent to all Presbyterian principles, that they exerted themselves to the utmost to thwart his designs ; and succeeded in limiting the power, both spiritual and temporal, of those who were sent as representatives to Parliament, by making them entirely amenable to the General Assembly for their conduct. In this contest, the Earl of Gowrie strenuously opposed his Majesty ; and by throwing all his interest into the opposite scale, carried the question against him.

This circumstance well seconded the efforts of Rathsay, and nourished in the King's bosom the seeds of suspicion and aversion.

During the time that this momentous question was depending at Montrose, the jealous imaginations of the clergy predicted in the event of the King's gaining his point, the ultimate re-establishment of Popery. And their harangues, delivered in Gowrie's hearing, on the inexhaustible subject of its abominations, and the vigilance required in every man who professed the reformed faith, or was true to his country, to crush its tenets, and discountenance its advocates, was so vehemently insisted on, that the Earl returned to Edinburgh, strengthened in his resolution, that whatever it might cost him, he would not lose the confidence of his countrymen, and appear to betray the interests of religion, by seeking his own happiness in allying himself with a Catholic.

The consequence of this renovated resolution was, that he absented himself from the Palace for some days after his return to Edinburgh. But this painful effort to shun the sight of her who was ever present to his

imagination, appeared to him rather to increase than diminish her influence over his mind. It was, therefore, quickly abandoned, and he was again a frequent guest in the Queen's private apartments, where he flattered himself his presence was often a salutary check upon his brother's thoughtless vivacity, who, fearful of a lecture from the Earl, had taken care not to give the opportunity he had sedulously sought for some time, of speaking to him in private on the subject of his conduct toward her Majesty. Ruthven had avoided this interview whenever it was craved by Gowrie, under pretence of some particular engagement; he was either obliged to attend his Majesty, or he had some commission intrusted to him, which he must execute, or he had some pressing appointment of his own; in short, he continued to foil the Earl in every attempt to see him alone. Gowrie was, however, determined to gain his point, and, for that purpose, remained at Holyrood later one night than was his usual custom, and

continued to linger there till Ruthven, who imagined him gone, had retired to his apartment, which the Earl entered soon after him, to his evident consternation.

“Can you for once undress without the assistance of your valet? or shall I offer my services as his substitute,” said the Earl, “having somewhat for your private ear?”

Ruthven, who saw there was no escape, dismissed his attendant.

“And now, my dear Gowrie, be merciful, for well ~~do~~ I know what hath procured me this domiciliary visit, or at least I surmise it is to reprove your unworthy brother—Is it not so?”

“No,” returned the Earl, with an accent of deep feeling; “not to reprove an unworthy, but to warn a dear and estimable brother,—one who but requires to listen to the dictates of his reason and noble nature, to become all that I could wish to see him.”

“Faith, I know not,” returned Ruthven; “methinks my reason sometimes makes a halt, while what you are pleased to call my

noble nature leads me wrong ; for it is ever urging me to commit one folly or other, under the pretext of amusement. But come, out with it at once—to the particulars, man. What is the offence with which I am charged ?”

“ Listen to me quietly for five minutes,” rejoined the Earl, “ and you shall learn it ; though I am inclined to think your memory at this moment points pretty exactly to the subject to which I allude ; but if it doth not, why, then, cast your eyes downwards to your breast that it may be refreshed.”

Ruthven did so, and perceived that the gift of the Queen, the obnoxious trinket, had escaped through the opening of his shirt-collar, while he stooped to unfasten the knees of his dress.

“ Pshaw,” said he, as, with a gesture of impatience, he quickly recovered it from its dangling position, and thrust it in again ; and to avoid looking at his brother, went on to finish his employment.

“Alas! my dear Alexander, to what does this folly of the Queen’s and your’s tend?”

“Why, it tends to make a coxcomb of me, you have said,” replied Ruthven, with a degree of pettishness; “but truly, if I know myself, I never yet did emulate such popinjays,—‘To shine so brisk, and smell so sweet, and talk so like a waiting gentlewoman.’”

“Are there then no coxcombs but such as made mad the valiant Hotspur?” said Gowrie. “Come, come, this is but subterfuge; and what I would say is of too serious a nature to be discussed in such an idle manner.—To be plain then, I fear me that your peace of mind will in time fall a sacrifice to the vanity of a giddy woman, who, presuming on her royal rank, takes delight in exercising her power, by entangling in her meshes the unwary whom her fascinations attract. And I earnestly beseech you, by all that you value and love, to withdraw yourself more from her presence. Think of our dear and venerated mother, whose heart

it would break, should you draw on you the jealousy and consequent vengeance of the King.

“What frightful chimeras are you conjuring up to terrify yourself withal?” said Ruthven. “For my part, I perceive no danger; for you cannot suppose me such an egregious ass, as to fall in love with another man’s wife—and the wife to boot of the most potent, wise, and erudite James, my liege lord, and royal master?”

“Allowing that there ~~is~~ no such risk, which is giving up much that I think not very improbable; yet does the danger not diminish, provided his Majesty should be piqued by her foolish attentions to you, and provided also, as in the case of the lamented Earl of Murray, there is a Huntly to be found.”

“Ah!” returned the Master, as if involuntarily, “you have touched the core of the subject now. But what can I do? You would not have me to repel her gra-

ciousness with rude neglect? You would not bid me——”

“Peace!” said the Earl, “and I will tell you what I *would* that you should do.—I would have you avoid her but half as sedulously as you have done for some time past him who now addresses you—and I would that you bow to her commands, and her flattery, with less the air of a devoted lover—and if, as you allege, your heart acquits you in this matter, clothe its meaning in a less equivocal garb. And now, my dear brother, convince me that you take in good part the advice of one, who, heaven is my witness, prizes your happiness more than his own; and give me the satisfaction of seeing you discard from your neck that ribband, the golden embroidery of which, by the way, I should imagine no very comfortable companion to your skin.”

Ruthven stood erect, and wrapping tightly over his breast the silken dressing-gown in which he was enveloped, as if the more firmly to secure his treasured locket, replied

to the Earl's request with heightened colour, his dark eyes brightly scintillating from under his jet-black eye-brows, which were scornfully contracted—

“ And is it the gallant Earl of Gowrie,” said he in a voice of angry derision, “ that would counsel such a craven act of foul dishonour to the gift of a woman and a Queen? —Is it he who heard me swear never to take it from the shoulders she deigned to adorn with it? Death and fury!” continued he, kindling into rage, “ I wonder you do not think it meet that I should fling it in her face, and say,—‘ Take again your trinket, lest I should be chastised for wearing it!’ You have heard me swear before never to part with it, and now,” continued he, with wild solemnity, as he raised his eyes and right hand to heaven, “ and now you shall hear it again.” And in that attitude he pronounced a solemn oath never voluntarily to remove it.

The Earl stood in fixed astonishment at his passionate vehemence, but there was

sorrow mingled with his surprise, and still preserving his usual dignified calmness of manner, he said,—“To-morrow, Alexander, when you have better considered this conversation, you will probably be as much surprised at your intemperate warmth as I am now, for to-night you have surely done me less than justice. You will be cooler when we meet again—till then, farewell!”

The Earl took a silver lamp from the table, which he had secured to light him through the labyrinth of passages to the place where his attendants waited, and, without remaining another instant, drew after him the door of the apartment. He had advanced but a few steps along the gallery, when he felt his shoulder seized with a convulsive grasp, and turning, beheld the face of Ruthven, entirely divested of its former expression. His high colour had fled, and his lately flashing eye had lost its daring expression, and now assumed a look of humble entreaty, as he drew the yielding Earl back toward his room.

“ Do return with me for a single instant, dear Gowrie,” said he.

The Earl, moved by his air of contrition, immediately re-occupied the place where he had stood a minute before. Ruthven shut the door, and approached him.

“ You cannot now object to my calling myself your unworthy brother ; for oh ! I could destroy myself for being the ungrateful fool I am !—Yet no,” he said, “ let me not wrong myself ; I am not indeed ungrateful, my noble-minded brother, for all your saint-like patience, and your care of such a wayward wretch as I am !—Say but you forgive me, and I will swear to do all that you desire, save that,” he continued, in a tremulous voice, and his eyes fixed upon the Earl, “ which I have already sworn not to do.—You will not again mention that, I am certain, for it is a matter of small consequence, provided I adhere to your advice in other respects.”

Gowrie took his brother's hand, and pressing it affectionately between his, he

said,—“ I not only freely and heartily forgive you for what hath passed, but thank you most gratefully for what you have now promised. It is quite sufficient. Henceforward, I trust, there will be no occasion to renew this subject. I require no oaths—I rely implicitly on your word.”

“ And you shall see how manfully I will perform my task,” said Ruthven.—“ But, dear Gowrie, if your thoughtless brother should presume to admonish in his turn, will you listen^{to} to him ?”

“ Willingly,” replied the Earl, while he felt his heart beat against his breast, as if conscious it was concerned in the matter.

“ Well, then,” continued Ruthven, with a sly smile, while he mimicked the Earl’s manner, and the language used by him to himself a short time before, (for his brother’s forgiveness had completely lightened his heart, and when that was the case, he could not long restrain his playful imagination)—“ Well, then, I would have you to discard from your thoughts all traffickers in idols ;

I would have you to avoid all communion with them, and I would that you bowed to the ~~Lady~~ Agnes Somerdale with less of the air of a devoted lover ;—for there are other eyes as sharp as mine, and I never see that dark Rathsay scowling on you both, but I long to give him a prick with my rapier.”

“ God forbid it should ever leave its scabbard for such a purpose !” replied the Earl ; “ but I will profit by your warning, and you shall be convinced,” he continued, as he sighed deeply, “ that I too can perform bravely what will indeed be no easy task. We understand each other now, dear Ruthven. Have you aught else to say before we part,—for the night wears apace ?”

Ruthven was checked into repentance for his late sally, when he beheld the expression of sorrow which passed over the Earl's countenance while he answered to it, and he went on, with a seriousness very unusual in him,—“ I was only going to inquire if you have made any observations on the conduct of the King towards you since his re-

turn from Montrose ; for I have either imagined it, or it hath savoured more of coolness than it was wont."

"I have perceived him somewhat shy in speech," said he, "but not more so than I might expect from the moody humour that hath possessed him since he was out-voted in the General Assembly."

"And may no evil consequence result from your violent opposition of his measures in church government?" continued Ruthven ; "for, believe me, no offence is more unpardonable with him than that committed against what he deems his high prerogative in church discipline."

"It is very probable it may be so," returned Gowrie ; "but you would not infer from thence that I must not oppose him?—I know you better than to believe you would have me a supple-kneed courtier, who barter his own principles for the favour of an imperious master?"

"No, no,—mistake me not," said Ruthven ; "I would not have thee other than

thou art ;—I only meant to say, that you need not be so very energetic in your opposition— you need not resemble so much a chafed lion, as you did, when you apprehended the ascendancy of the King's party at Montrose."

" I confess there is some truth in what you say, and I will amend it.—And now, once more, good night. "

CHAPTER XII.

Her cheek was pale, her form was spare,—
Vigils and penitence austere
Had early quench'd the light of youth,
But gentle was the dame in sooth;
Though vain of her religious sway,
She loved to see her maids obey;
Yet nothing stern was she in cell,
And the nuns loved their Abbess well.

SCOTT.

WE now return to the Abbess, who still remained at the Hostel of Loretto, as much as possible secluded from the public gaze; never venturing from her apartment, save when, for the sake of her health, she stole out to take a lonely walk among the ruins that surrounded her place of confinement; for it was only with them she appeared to hold converse, while contrasting the present scene with the ancient grandeur of

the proud pile, when it contained the shrine at which the chiefs of the land—the valiant and the fair, had bowed down and adored. Indignation and sorrow filled her mind, as she wandered for hours amidst the fallen arches and dilapidated walls, lamenting, in bitterness of spirit, the wickedness of her native country, and still, as she mourned its apostacy, making firm resolves that she would not return to her convent without the child of her sister. The only mitigation of the evil of the marriage with a heretic of her she had loved so well, lay in her having educated her daughter in the true faith; and when she received the account of her sister's death, and at the same time a letter, written by her a short time previous to her dissolution, conjuring her, by every tie of affection, and every sacred consideration, to leave nothing unattempted to place her daughter in the convent over which she presided, she took, during the first moments of grief and agitation, a solemn vow before the Cross, to do all which

promised the smallest prospect of fulfilling her sister's desire. Her first effort was made in addressing a letter of strong remonstrance to the father of Agnes, in which she represented, in glowing colours, the unfeeling turpitude of resisting the dying injunctions of his wife. This application, however, did not succeed, and Agnes positively refused to quit Scotland without the consent of her father. But when, however, shortly afterwards, the holy mother was informed of the death of Lord Somerdale, and that his daughter was placed under the protection of the Queen, she became determined to brave the dangers of the journey, and, withdrawing her clandestinely, to carry her back with her to Rome. She accordingly applied to the Pope for leave to quit her convent, and for some holy man to protect and assist her in her plan. This application being made just as his Holiness was meditating on sending the Jesuit to Scotland as a spy, he readily granted her request, and committed her to

his care ; and having performed the journey to Scotland in safety, she remained, ~~with~~ most Christian patience, awaiting the time when the Jesuit should be able to accomplish a meeting between her and her niece ; but, as it must of necessity be a stolen one, it was requisite that she should remove from her abode at Musselburgh to the neighbourhood of Holyrood. The Jesuit had therefore been endeavouring to procure her an asylum nearer to that place, but hitherto without success, for some objection attached to every place that offered itself to his notice ; and he began to despair of finding her such an abode as the circumstances of the case required, when one day while on his walk to visit her, he met his old acquaintance Nicol Partan, who instantly recollecting him, saluted him with—

“ Weel, maister !—this is a quieter night than we forgathered in last time.—And how’s a’ wi’ your sister ?—I hear she still bides wi’ the Lady o’ Loretto, though I never see her when I gang wi’ the fish ;

though, an she were like some auld wives I ken, an I didna see her, I wad hae a gude chance to hear her," said he, casting a look of sly intelligence at a square-built brosy-faced girl who accompanied him, and who returned it; "for, ye see, I'm just gaun wi' my dochter here to see ane o' thae kind o' limmers, that, faith! we ha'na been near hand I canna tell the time; for she's sic an ill-natured deevil, that a' body's fear'd for her, and troth she gets a word o' no being ower canny; and yet, ye ken, for a' her failings, a body canna just let her dee her lane, and the lass that carries her a drap milk ilka mornin has sent to tell us that she's broken her leg; but she ill deserves ony waiting on at Grizzly's hand, for she wadna tak her afore, though she had lost a' her ain weans;—but, to be sure, that was because she didna want ane to ken her Papist customs."

The Jesuit, who, weary of the man's harangue, was moving off, now became all attention, and encouraged him to proceed,

by saying, "The old woman of whom you speak is some relation of yours, I suppose?"

"Fien-sae," returned Nicol; "my mither and her were twa sisters, but she was far aulder than my mither, and she married a Papist man, that was ane o' them that looked after the King's Park, in the auld Queen-mither's day, and had a bit sheeling down in the gully there, atween Arthur's Seat and the Craigs, and there she bides still, and naeboddy fashes wi' her. For whan a' her bairns and her gudeman dee'd, she aye threapit she couldna live awa' frae the part where she brought up her family; sae there was interest made for her wi' some o' the grand folk at the court, and she got leave to bide. But an she had been amang neebours, she wad hae been brunt for a witch lang syne, though ye may weel think I dinna believe a word o' it mysel, or I wadna be gaun to let this bit lassie bide wi' her.—But an the de'il hasna made her a witch, him and her gudeman thegither ha' made her a Papist;

but, ye sec, it's thought she has a pose, and we ken she has gude claise, baith for back and bed, and it wad be a sair pity for framet folk to get them ; sae I hearten up Grizzly here, and tell her the auld carlin winna live lang, and then she'll get a' her braws, if she has but patience to wait on her a wee bit ; but, puir thing, she's fear'd to gang for a' that."

" What kind of a dwelling hath this old woman of whom you speak ?" inquired the Jesuit.

" It's no that ill a dwallin," said Nicol ; " for ye see her gudeman was used to work amang stanes, for it was his place to bigg up the slaps i' the Park dyke ; sae he bigget the bit house himsel, and took mair pains than common, and it's gay and substantial, and has twa apartments."

" Could it," said the Jesuit, " by any means be made a place of shelter for my sister, who is tired of remaining at an inn, and dislikes the noise of a town—I should

be willing to furnish it with what necessities may be required?"

Nicol pushed his bonnet on one side, and scratching his head, paused, in thoughtful mood, upon the proposal. At length he said, "Weel, ye see, an she could put up wi' it, od, it wadna be that impossible to mak it decent, for the auld crater has gude things about her; but I'm doubtin' she winna hear tell o' ony body livin' aside her—Na, na!" continued he, "I'm fearing that wad never do—But, if ye're no thrang at hame, ye may gang up wi' Grizzly and me—we'll mak ye walcome, and then ye can see what the auld limb o' Satan says till't hersel."

"And, being pretty well skilled in surgery," returned the Jesuit, "you may tell her you have brought me to examine her leg."

To this proposal Nicol readily assented, and the Jesuit turning back, proceeded with him and his daughter, who continued to wend on their way till they reached the

King's Park, and passing up that lonely valley to the west of the mountain called Arthur's Seat, soon lost sight of the city in the deep recesses of the glen, which, wild, lonely and rugged, was, at the bottom, a complete morass, while the sides presented hanging cliffs, over which flaunted the ivy and wild rose, torn from their hold by the sweeping blast, while here and there a bush of purple heather, or a cluster of plants peculiar to the rock, bloomed from its crevices.

The sun was pouring a downward sickly ray into the bosom of the glen, which gleaming faintly on the small casements of the little hut they were approaching, discovered it to the Jesuit ; for, half hid under the projection of a cliff, its grey walls, built from the surrounding fragments, and its thatch capped with moss, presented no contrast to distinguish it from the surrounding objects. As they approached nearer, they observed a young woman open the door, and cast an anxious look down the path by which

they were ascending, who instantly ran forward to meet them, expressing her joy at their arrival, and her own release from attending on the old woman, whom she represented as being in less pain, but in no measure better tempered. Without tarrying to say more, she passed on her way, while they proceeded to enter the cottage; at the door of which they found a large mastiff, who, lying with his head couched between his paws, and his eyes watching their motions, disputed their entrance by regularly raising his head, and shewing his teeth, accompanied by a low snarl every time they attempted to cross the threshold. After various ineffectual essays, and endeavours to coax the dog by pronouncing his name in a fondling manner, Nicol at length called loudly to the inmate of the cottage to call in her d—n'd dog, that he might enter.

A voice, that seemed little enfeebled by either age or illness, resounded directly from the interior,—"Why curse ye ~~one~~ that's better than yoursel, Nicol Partin? for it's you,

I ken ye by your voice.—Here, Beaton, come in and let the carle pass," she said. And the dog obeying her command, and rising from his station, stalked slowly in and lay down before the fire.

"I marvel muckle, Lucky," said Nicol, "that ye gie sic honour to that auld bluidy Cardinal, as to ca' your dog after him;" and he chuckled in triumph, as he looked at the Jesuit, at this stroke aimed at the faith of the old woman.

"And is it sic an honour, then, to gie a body's name to a brute beast, think ye? But an he were bloody, I could soon gar his namesake resemble him," said she, with a degree of savage anger gleaming in her eyes, at this mention of the Cardinal; "for one word o' my mouth he would tear ye where ye stand."

"Gude save us!" said Nicol, "that wad be an unco story indeed! but ye speak gay an crouse, and I'm glad to see ye no sae bad as I expected; and I hae fetched our Grizzy to mind ye as lang as ye need

her." And he dragged forward his frightened daughter close to the bed.

The old crone raised her head, and said in a tone of strong irony, in which something of exultation was mingled,—“ Ay, ay, I see the eagles are gathered thegither, but the carcase is no ready for the pikeing yet.”

“ Na,” said Nicol, “ an ye mean that I wish ye dead, it’s nae sign o’ it, I trow, when I hae brought a physicianer wi’ me to set your leg.”

“ My leg needs nae doctors to set it,” said she, peevishly; “ it’s swelled bigger nor that wench’s waist, that’s nane o’ the jimppest; but gin I had ony body that had sense to seek some herbs that I could mention, to make a poultice, it would soon fa’, and then if he had skill to set it he might.”

The Jesuit, who had till now stood aloof, stepped forward.—“ And what herbs, good mother, would you use for this purpose?” said he; “ for there are few that you could name with which I am not acquainted, and

I shall feel pleasure in procuring them for you."

To this offer she lent a willing ear; and while they conversed on the virtues of the plants she mentioned, she appeared to regard him with more favour than those of her own species commonly found in her eyes. During this time, Nicol had left the apartment to examine the condition of the opposite one, which the Jesuit remarking, requested Grizzy to bring him a draught of water from a spring he had observed at some little distance from the house; and she was no sooner gone, than putting his mouth to the ear of the old woman, he said,—“ My good mother, if I mistake not, you and I hold the same faith, for I understand you are considered as a member of the only true church, of which I am a priest; if it is so, speak without reserve, for we are alone?”

She turned her eyes upon him, and earnestly regarding him, said,—“ If this is a trap laid for the destruction of a poor auld creature, my blood be upon your head; but

I shall not deny what it can now injure none but myself to confess."

"I rejoice to hear this," said the Jesuit, -- as I would fain seek the shelter of your roof for a daughter of the same persecuted religion, whose circumstances make her now require it."

"If ye say sooth," returned the old woman, "welcome are ye to me, that have dreed a weary weird, with none to gie me ghostly comfort; and welcome too shall she be of whom ye speak."

The girl now entered with the water, when the Jesuit began again to discourse of herbs and cataplasms; and soon after Nicol returned from his investigation, and winking at the Jesuit, approached the bed.

"I never come here, Lucky," said he, "but what I aye wonder mair and mair how ye can hide to live by yoursel in sic an eerie hole as this."

"Fools are aye wondering," said the old woman.

“ Now I wad think,” continued Nicol, without attending to her courteous remark, “ if ye had some canny body to bide aside ye, it wad be muckle better, seeing ye are auld and failed ; for Saunders’s dochter tell-ed me that when she cam up last night, wi’ your soup milk, ye were lying out by, no able to trail yoursel a yard frae the end o’ the biggin’, where ye had fa’un in climb-in’ the hen nests ; and gin ye had lain lang ye wad hae frozen to deed in sic a cauld night as the last.”

“ And what matter ?” returned the old woman ; “ has life, think ye, been sic a blessing to me that I need to dree its close ? But where are ye to find a body sac canny that I could be fashed wi’ ?—ken ye of such a one ?”

“ And that do I,” quoth Nicol ; “ for this same Maister Austin here has a sister wha wad like weel to be out by frac a town, and, as I think, maun be something o’ your ain stamp, that she canna bide din ; and now,

seeing ye hae that other end empty, what might hinder ye to tak her in, and keep Grizzy here to wait upon ye baith?"

"And I," said the Jesuit, "am most willing to furnish what may be necessary for the comfort of my sister, and also to make this good mother a suitable recompense for her kindness in lodging her."

"Say ye sae?" said the old woman, affecting to be pleased with his offers. "And when would she be for coming?"

"Why," returned the Jesuit, "as soon as you can receive her." And on a sign from Nicol, he followed him across the passage to a small apartment, where he was surprised to find the walls covered with tapestry, which, though coarse in the extreme, still gave it a look of comfort and neatness. Every thing about it appeared in the nicest order; in one corner stood a small bed, furnished with coarse woollen curtains, and in the opposite one a large chest of oak, rubbed into perfect brightness; the

fire-place, "hospitably wide," took up nearly one end of the small room, and appeared on the outside of the house like a hut attached to it;—on the chimney-place stood several pewter mugs, and two small quaighs of cunning workmanship.

"Now," said Nicol, looking round him with the pride of a near kinsman to the owner of these riches, "I tell'd ye the cratur had gude up-pittin, but it's lang sin' ony ane entered this place but hersel—for it was here a' her family dee'd, and she has aye keepit it steckit up sin' syne, save whan she cam in to redd it up hersel; and it's been aye looked on, in a manner, as a place no fit for a sinfu' mortal to enter. But it's surprisin," he continued, "what a haud the warld maun still keep o' her auld heart, for I'm sure I ne'er thought she wad tak in a lodger; but do ye mind how she gripped to the offer ance ye spak about payin' her weel? Od, there's nae kenning ony body or they be tried wi' siller."

The Jesuit could scarce refrain from smi-

ling at the mistake of honest Nicol, although his own experience of mankind had taught him that the fisherman had no way over-rated the powers of bribery.

Before the Jesuit departed, he promised to send immediately the herbs which she required; and, fixed upon the second day from that for the removal of the Abbess to her new abode, that being the earliest time appointed by the old woman.

Meanwhile, Grizzy, much enlivened by the prospect of not being left entirely alone with the old dame, of whose freedom from witchcraft she did not feel such conviction as her father appeared to do—and by some instinctive prescience that a share of that reward she heard offered by the Jesuit might come her way, exerted herself to the utmost. And turning up her gay upper petticoat of yellow woolsey, she bestirred herself so actively, according to the old woman's directions, that the hearth of the spense (or better apartment) soon smiled with a brisk fire of intermingled wood and

peats, round which sheets and blankets were disposed, whose hue and texture bespoke a degree of care and wealth very unusual in the owner's situation of life, and which Grizzy, bearing in mind her father's words, eyed as she unfolded with no small satisfaction, and having finished her various tasks, betook herself to rest, with a lighter heart than she had followed her father to the valley.

CHAPTER XIII.

O drive me from that traitor, man!
So I might 'scape that monster, let me dwell
In lion's haunts, or in some tiger's den;
Place me on some steep craggy ruin'd rock,
That bellies out, just dropping in the ocean;
Bury me in the hollow of its womb;
Where starving on my cold and flinty bed,
I may from far, with giddy apprehension,
See infinite fathoms down the rumbling deep:
Yet not e'en there, in that vast whirl of death,
Can there be found so terrible a ruin
As man! false man! smiling, destructive man!

LEE.

WHEN, after a lapse of two days, the Jesuit arrived at the inn at Loretto to remove the Abbess to her new abode, he found it a scene of uproar and confusion. All the inmates of the house were assembled in the hall, and the Abbess herself in the midst of them. She had, on going that

day to take her usual walk among the ruins, left her purse in the leathern-case before mentioned as being carried under the arm of the Jesuit on his first arrival ; which, on her return, she found cut open and her money gone. Her hostess, upon the loss being made known to her, shocked at such a depredation committed in her house, brought together every person it contained, and insisted on their undergoing an examination of their persons. This was willingly submitted to, and proved fruitless, while all in turn declared their innocence. That it was some person, however, under the shelter of her roof, our hostess declared her belief, from the circumstance of no stranger having been, to her knowledge, in the house at the time the theft was committed. And the Abbess suddenly recollecting that the purse had never been seen by any one except our old acquaintance the hostler's boy, whom she had furnished with money from it a few days before, when he was sent to procure for

her some articles from the town, she hesitated not to make known the circumstance.

The moment the hostler heard this, he seized upon the boy, and assuming the prerogative of a master, gave him such a beating as he had not received since he fell into the hands of Laurence, on the night he attempted to keep him out of the inn. Nothing, however, escaped the urchin to criminate himself, and it was only from a knowledge of his former mal-practices, that Griffy persisted in believing him the depredator. In this belief he was confirmed on searching the stable, where he found the purse concealed in some litter, which it was the business of the boy to remove. This exasperated the hostess so much, that she insisted on delivering up the boy to the arm of the law, that he might be punished for his delinquency. This was, however, strenuously opposed by the Abbess and the Jesuit, as they must have appeared in his prosecution. They, therefore, prevailed on the Lady of Loretto to mitigate her wrath, and content

herself with frightening and dismissing him. For the first of these purposes he was delivered over to the hostler, to be by him confined in the out-house appropriated to the keeping of fuel, until, as he was made to believe, the officers of justice should arrive to convey him to prison. In conformity with this plan, Griffy seized upon him before he was aware that his roguery was detected, and dragging him to the out-house—“Bide there, ye young thieving dog,” said he, “till ye change your quarters to the braw new tolbooth;” alluding to that building which was just then erected from the materials of the demolished Chapel of Loretto, and which, being the first of these sacred edifices whose stones were taken for the profane purpose of constructing a secular building, so enraged the Pope against the people of Musselburgh, that they were most particularly cursed by name annually at Rome, for a long series of years. The boy pled hard for mercy, but the hostler was inexorable; and, pushing him in, he turned a

stout key on the only outlet from the place of his confinement, it having no window or other door whereby he might escape. Having deposited the key in his pocket, he set himself to provide a horse and saddle for the Abbess, which he had previously been ordered by the Jesuit to have in readiness, and which was in a short time awaiting her, it being specified that it should be returned in a few hours. The Abbess took leave of her kind-hearted and obliging hostess with that feeling of regret we experience, when parting from those whose good offices have recommended them to our notice, and whom we are never to see again. And our hostess never having had one of the female sex so long an inmate of her house, and being won, moreover, by the gentle and benevolent manners of the Abbess, expressed her sorrow aloud as she accompanied her to the gate of the inn-yard, where were placed the stone steps by which she mounted her palfrey.

“ It’s nae business o’ mine to speer where

ye're gaun to tak up your quarters," said she, as she assisted her to adjust the skirt of her dress; " but I hope ye wi'na gang by my door if you ever come this gait again, and I trust ye hae been sorted to your liking in our puir hostel, barring the gliff ye got wi' that whalp o' Satan, whilk hath geen me muckle vexation, I'm sure."

The Jesuit and the Abbess both expressed their perfect satisfaction at the treatment they had received; and the former promising to call occasionally on his Reverence, they departed on their way, the Jesuit leading the horse of the Abbess, from which, on reaching the skirts of the city of Edinburgh, she dismounted, and waited for a short time till he conveyed it to the stable of a little ale-house, where he agreed with the owner to send it back to the Hostel of Loretto. Having speedily settled this matter, and rejoined the Abbess, they proceeded, just as the last rays of the setting sun had disappeared, to the abode of Euphan Macauley, or, as she was commonly called, Euphan of

the Craigs, where they were received by its mistress with a welcome which she had long refused to any casual guests.

They found a table covered with a cloth, which vied in whiteness with the sheets before mentioned, on which were placed manchetts, or small loaves of the finest flour, exclusively the food of the higher classes, and to these were speedily added a young fowl fricaseed, and an omelet, both dressed by the direction of old Euphan, and placed on the table by the delighted Grizzy, who had never before contemplated such luxury, much less prepared it. Their meal was no sooner finished, than the Abbess gladly withdrew to her neat little apartment, being much fatigued by a mode of travelling to which she was totally unaccustomed, taking Grizzy with her to assist in undressing her. The Jesuit seized this opportunity of informing Euphan, that the person whom she had received under her roof was a woman of high rank, who had come to withdraw the daughter of a departed sister from the influence of her heretic

relations; nor, on entering deeper into conversation with her, and perceiving her devotion to the faith she professed, did he scruple to inform her of the names and situations of the parties, being well convinced that in so doing he had nothing to fear from so zealous a Catholic,—treachery to each other being rarely practised by those professing her persecuted creed; and, indeed, in the very countenance of this woman he read the characters of constancy and firmness to her purpose, of which she was in reality a striking example. And it was with the greatest satisfaction he heard her rejoice in having it in her power to give an asylum to one whom she professed to venerate, as so distinguished a member of the church.

Before the Jesuit took leave of old Euphan for the night, he examined her ancle, of which the poultice had laid the swelling so much, that he clearly perceived they had mistaken the nature of the injury it had sustained, and that it was, instead of the bone being broken, only violently sprained;

he therefore applied such bandages as his skill suggested, and then took his leave, recommending the Abbess again to her hospitality. Euphan, who seemed for the time to lose much of her misanthropy, promised to do all which her own painful situation allowed for her guest's comfort. And she was truly anxious to perform this promise, for the society of those of her own faith, from which she had been long debarred, appeared as a glimpse of light to her benighted mind.

The story of this woman was indeed a melancholy one. She was sprung from a respectable family, who, falling into poverty, gladly resigned her, at an early age, to the care of the Lord Cliftonhall, one of the Senators of the College of Justice. With his children she was brought up more as a companion than a servant, and educated above the station in which she was destined to move. At the age of twenty, she married a dependant of her master's, who had attracted the notice of the Queen Regent,

by the stout resistance he made in aid of her party, during a tumult on St Giles's day, when her Majesty, passing through the city of Edinburgh, was insulted by the populace. In recompense of which service, she had bestowed on him the place of one of the keepers of the Park, where, as before related, he had lived. It was here that Euphan had reared a family of five children, four boys and a girl; her two second boys, one nine, and the other eleven years of age, had both perished together, by falling into a quarry, while struggling with each other on its brink. Her husband and her youngest son died of a malignant fever; and some years after this, to add to her heavy misfortunes, her eldest son, who had, in a great measure, supplied his father's place, was banished beyond seas for repeatedly aiding the priests of his religion in their escape from their persecutors. The miserable Euphan had now but one stay left her in the world,—her daughter, who strove to make up to her wretched parent as much as was pos-

sible the severe losses she had sustained ; and in some measure succeeded. But this consolation was also destined to be withdrawn. The extreme beauty of the young Lillias drew on her the regards of a young man of rank, who had frequently met her in her way to the city, where she occasionally went. Her situation in life did not admit of his making her his wife ; but she listened to him till her heart and her happiness were the sacrifices, and nought remained to console her, but her unspotted innocence. It failed, however, to support her under the disappointed fervour of a first and ardent attachment ; and pining in secret at her own imprudence, and the perfidy of him who could win her heart but to break it, consumption preyed upon her vitals, and she drooped from day to day, till she wasted away, and perished like some tender and late flower, which, withered by the sudden breath of wintry winds, first loses its vivid hue, then hangs its head, and at length

falls prostrate in the dust. It was now that Euphan's despair was complete. And her naturally hardy constitution and strong mind, which prevented her from sinking entirely under her misfortunes, exhausted their energies in wild misanthropy ; one of the usual and bitter themes of which, was the decay of the Catholic faith, and the wickedness and perfidy of the reformed. For it was a Protestant who brought her Lillias to the grave, and Protestants who had banished her son to die in a foreign land.

This bitter resentment against the Protestants prevented her having any intercourse with them which she could avoid ; and she had lived many years with no other companion than the old mastiff, already mentioned, whom she regarded almost as a reasonable being. His fierce fidelity protected her from all intruders, and he became the only creature on earth to which she was attached. Euphan was thus, in

the course of a few years, by her unhappy circumstances, and her own choice, cut off from all intercourse with her kind. In this state of confirmed apathy, she considered life as a penance, from which she was not at liberty to release herself, lest she should forfeit the hope of meeting those in a better world, whose loss had made this a wilderness. But though she consented to endure life, her forbearance had in it no touch of that un murmuring resignation which bestows peace, where it cannot confer happiness, and pours a softening balm into those wounds too deep for it to heal.

The Jesuit had repeated her story to the Abbess as told him by Nicol, and it had inspired her with the deepest pity for the unfortunate being, whose mind had been warped to its present misanthropy, by such stern misfortune. She therefore benevolently endeavoured to soften, in some measure, the hatred which the old woman felt of life and all its concerns. The arguments which the Abbess used for this purpose, were drawn

from that religion which had, through life, been her own support, and were enforced with such earnestness and kindness, that they could not fail to produce a transient good effect on the mind of her to whom they were addressed ; for, although accustomed to the rigours of a monastic life, the Abbess was neither cold in her affections, nor severe in her manners. The stately reserve of her usual demeanour was more the result of the ceremonial of her exalted station, than of either the pride of birth, or the rigidity of bigotry ; and she condescended, with the utmost humility, to endure the morose mood of her aged companion ; and would remain for hours conversing with her at the side of her bed, till she caught some expression of language, or of countenance, which shewed that her endeavours had not been entirely in vain.

One day, while thus employed, the Abbess ventured to suggest that pride might have been the cause of aggravating her sufferings, by its not allowing her to humble

herself sufficiently before the chastening rod of Him, who only knows what measure of affliction is necessary to bring us home to himself.

Euphan seemed somewhat softened by this remark ; and the good mother went on to recommend severe penance, as the proper medicine for this disease of the soul ; but no sooner did she pronounce this opinion, than Euphan vehemently interrupted her, while her features assumed a fearful wildness.

“ Penance ! what speak ye of penance, holy lady ? ” she said ; “ there remains nought for me that deserves the name. Can the chafed animal, whom the hunter’s dart hath pierced, feel the puny sting of the pismire ? I trow not !—as little can Euphan Macauley be sensible to all that penance can inflict.—Na, na,” she continued, “ my penances are what others deem their comforts. What doth my food, but prolong my days of misery ?—What doth my sleep, but recall the images of those that are gone,

that I may the more lament them when I wake? Or has the whole world another misery for her, whose darkened bosom the blessed sun in his brightness seems but to mock? Speak no more then of penance, but rather help me to curse the monsters who have bereaved me of my bonny daughter, and my buirdly son.—How long shall the heretic triumph? How long shall they break in pieces thy people, O Lord, and afflict thine heritage? How long shall they stay the widow and the stranger, and murder the father?—Let their posterity be cut off, and their names blotted out!—do thou bring down their heads with sorrow to the grave and let them be desolate, even as I am now!”

As the old woman concluded these bitter petitions, she compressed her lips, and clenched her hands with such savage earnestness, that the milder nature of the Abbess shrunk from beholding her; for she was by constitution incapable of that cruel zeal, which abetted the acts of merciless vengeance that so often overtook in those days the unfor-

tunate heretic. And while she shuddered at what she deemed the atrocious wickedness of the reformers in casting off the yoke of the Romish Church, her wishes and supplications pointed to their conversion and final happiness, and not to their punishment here, and destruction hereafter ; for her early seclusion in an abode of peace and prayer, had refined the dross of her human passions, and left her scarce the power of comprehending their evil effects in others.

This seemed clearly understood by Euphan, who, on all occasions, seemed to possess an intuitive knowledge of the sentiments of others, and who now read in the face of the Abbess, the horror and reluctance with which she listened to her.

“ Ah, holy lady !” said she, “ you have been keepit in the shade of the green tree, under the summer sky, and ken little of the rough blast and the scaithful lightning that have wrecked themselves on this bare head and withered heart !”

There was a bitterness of suffering, and an apparent justice in the reproach, that went to the heart of the Abbess. ‘

“Thou sayest true, unfortunate woman,” said the Mother, while the unrepressed tears flowed down her pale cheeks. “God forbid that I should put my milder destiny in the balance with thine! and O! that it were in my power to alleviate thy sufferings!”

“It is in your power, holy lady,” said Euphan, as she passed her hand under the head of the bed on which she lay, and produced a small bag filled with gold pieces. “Promise that you will cause this to be expended in masses, for the souls of my husband and children, and for my own, when I shall have passed through the valley of death, and you will render my burden lighter, and the way smoother which I have yet to tread.”

The Abbess took it, and promised faithfully not only to fulfil her desire, but to add to it for the same pious purpose, as soon as she had again reached her convent.

A smile passed over the features of Euphan, which had been long strangers to such an expression, and she devoutly raised her eyes and hands, and prayed for blessings on the Abbess, and that she might be granted her heart's desire in rescuing from the evils of this world the maiden for whom she was so solicitous.

"That gold which now lies on your lap," said Euphan, when she had finished her prayer, "was the gift of the blessed martyr, Mary of Scotland. She bestowed it upon me with her own hands; and not all that I have since suffered hath been able to banish from my memory her angel look, when walking one summer's evening up this valley, she sent for me to bring my bairns out, that she might see them, for she knew that her mother placed my husband here for warding off a stone by his own person, which was sacrilegiously aimed at her by a miscreant during a tumult in the city. I went out, joyfully, as you may think, with my two lammies, one in each

hand, for I had then but two boys; she praised their beauty, and taking the younger, with his blue eyes and fair complexion, for a girl, she gave me that money, and bade me keep it for my daughter's tocher. I undeceived her Majesty, but vowed that I would lay it by, and if ever God blessed me with a lassie, it should be her portion; and I have kept the gold, and lost my daughter!—But," she continued, after a short pause of unutterable agony, "it will now, thanks to you, holy lady, become a better portion."

It was on the same night of this conversation that Grizzy burst into the apartment of the Abbess in great affright, expressing her belief that the old woman was in a fit, or the agonies of death. The Mother rose immediately, and taking up the iron lamp which she burnt through the night, followed the girl to the bed-side of Euphan, whom she soon perceived to be asleep, but apparently haunted by some distressing vision, for she writhed her body, and tossed her

arms aloft, while rage was marked upon her countenance, and the white foam gathering on her lips, was agitated by her breath as she muttered deep curses on the head of some one, with whom she fancied herself struggling.

“There!” said she at length, “there! down, down to thine own place!—I have conquered—I knew it—fiends cannot enter here—thou hast no power to break the hearts of angels!—And now thou art sunk for ever.—And I come,” she cried, starting up in the bed, and throwing forward her body, and her outstretched arms, while the same smile again illumined her countenance, which had so transiently lighted it up in her late conversation with the Abbess, but which was fearfully altered in its expression, as the rays of the lamp fell on the deadness of her open eyes straining on vacancy.

“Thou art here, my beloved daughter,” she continued; “oh! press me yet again upon thy snowy bosom, and let me run my fingers through these long bright locks, as I was

wont. Thou smilest on thine old fond mother ! and well thou mayest, for she is happy now ; but thou knowest not what she hath endured since thou didst leave her." And she pressed her hands upon her heart, from whence a long and labouring sob proceeded.

The Abbess perceiving that this suffocating sensation was about to awake her, turned the light from her face, and motioning Grizzy to follow her, quitted the apartment on tiptoe, deeply affected by the scene she had witnessed, but which she justly traced to the conversation which had so recently passed between them.

The Abbess was not a little surprised, on entering Euphan's room the next morning, to find her dressed, by the assistance of Grizzy, and sitting in an armed chair by the fire. The tones of her voice were somewhat softened, and she remarked, that something of her usual asperity was abated toward the willing but awkward Grizzy, as she adjusted the bandages on her ankle,

which was fast gaining strength, though still at times exceedingly painful. She, however, appeared at all times to endure bodily pain with the uncomplaining constancy of an Indian; and it was only by the appearance of her limb, and her inability to move it, that those around her had been able to judge of the extent of the injury it had sustained.

This change for the better in old Euphan arose entirely from the promise the Abbess had made as to the disposal of the money intrusted to her. The superstitious belief of being able, by our prayers for the dead, to better their eternal condition, is one, we may suppose, calculated to take the strongest hold on the human mind, and to bestow on it a consolation, the greatest of which it is capable, under the affliction of losing those who have been dear to us. The Abbess herself had lately experienced this consolation, decked in all its most splendid illusions, when the solemn rites of her religion were performed on the death of Lady Agnes's mother, in

the monastery over which she presided ; and she felt a pious satisfaction in being the medium through which the desolate heart of this poor woman was to receive such comfort, as she had herself then experienced.

CHAPTER XIV.

I do oppose my patience to his fury ; and am arm'd
To suffer with a quietness of spirit,
The very tyranny and rage of his.

SHAKESPEARE.

IT was the month of May before the long expected company of English comedians landed at Leith. But no sooner was their arrival made known, than, by a general session of the city, it was declared infamous to resort to the theatre. And the ministers sent a deputation to remonstrate with his Majesty on what they termed an outrage about to be committed on the church. This mission was headed by Robert Bruce, that conscientious and virtuous man, who was afterwards devoted by James to become

an exile from his country, because he refused to pronounce, from the chair of truth, what he believed to be falsehood ; thus preferring banishment to the loss of integrity.

He was followed into the presence of the King,—who, on this occasion, thought proper to receive them privately,—by four other clergymen, who formed a sort of procession, walking after their leader, according to their standing in the ministry.

When they advanced up the apartment, there was a solemnity in their gait and garments, which might well have suited a funeral train ; and as they approached his Majesty, his full-orbed eyes were bent upon them in sullen displeasure : he returned their stiff, but low and respectful obeisance, with a slight and haughty bend of the neck ; and was himself the first to speak.

“ It maun needs be a dutiful address, and acceptable to his Sovereign withal,” said James, “ whilk Maister Robert Bruce is made the vehicle o’ conveying to the ears

o' his King and rightfu' Prince. Speak on then, that we may learn its purport."

The ministers ranged themselves on each side of their spokesman, who thus addressed the King, while his frank and open, though firm and manly countenance, formed a complete contrast to those of the other ministers of the church, who chanced to be joined in commission with him, and whose features were formal, rigid, and gloomy.

"May it please your Majesty,—the ministers of the reformed established kirk of this realm have heard, with grief and humiliation, that it hath been the pleasure of your Majesty to allow of the introduction within it of certain profane and idle persons from England, styled comedians, whose licentious representations manifestly tend to the subversion of good order, and those strict principles of purity so necessary to its preservation. They therefore humbly crave of your Majesty, that you will be pleased to take into consideration the scandal done to

religion in entertaining these profligate persons, and allowing them to exhibit their vain and unprofitable plays ; and that you will dismiss them forthwith from the kingdom ; whereby your Majesty will prove your care of the immortal interests of your subjects, in not rendering them liable to such evil temptation. And, further, relieve the ministers of the Holy Evangel, from the grievous necessity of labouring to countervail your Majesty's influence in this matter, which they dutifully seek to avoid ;—but which, fearing God and his commandments, they must nevertheless be under the necessity of doing, in compliance with his decrees, should your Majesty not be inclined to hearken to their voices, and——”

Here the King, who had with much difficulty contained himself, interrupted him, and made his displeasure ample amends for the curb to which he had thus long subjected it, by bursting forth into a torrent of invective ; for the countenance and language

of James, despite the dissimulation and king-craft on which he so much valued himself, seldom failed to betray him when his passions were violently agitated.

“Never King, we believe,” said he, while his whole frame shook with passion, and his face became like a flame of fire—“Never King, we believe, did *sae lang* and patiently bruik sic usage frae contumacious ministers, whae have aye played the part o’ incendiaries atween us and our people. But let them no forget, stiff-neckit as they are, that we can punish them. And by —, Bruce,” said he, rising from his chair, and furiously stamping with his foot, “if they do not instanter rescind the cursed act, whilk we understand they hae passed anent thae players, they had better begin a timeous flight toward the Border; for de’il broil me eternally, if they shall find me slack in convincing them that we understand our rights. What! do ye fancy ye have a power,—God save the mark!—ower Kings *in ordine ad spiritualia*?”

Every gesture of Bruce's body, and tone of his voice, while delivering the address, or rather remonstrance, to the King, had been forcibly marked with the zeal and authority of a Christian minister, but it was also admirably mingled with the humility and respectful deference of a subject.

The King had, however, no sooner paused for an instant, than Bruce, not choosing to remain longer to hear his brethren abused, or himself insulted by James's profanity, bowed with an air of offended dignity, and slowly withdrew, followed again by the four clergymen who had attended him to the presence, and who had been casting looks of horror and reproach upon the King, while he gave vent to his anger.

"What," said the King, as soon as they disappeared, turning to Rathsay, who was the only person present, "have we escaped the meddling prerogative o' the Pope, to be priest-ridden in this fashion? Na! by my saul; the players shall gang on though a'

the ministers i' the kingdom should join i' the cry again' them."

"The reception your Majesty gave these holy men just now, will, I doubt not," said Rathsay, "set the matter at rest; for it is not to be thought that the citizens have so soon forgotten the removal of your Majesty's person and court from their city, when they last rebelled against your sovereign pleasure. Meantime, it is unquestionably the duty of all your Majesty's servants, to countenance, to the extent of their power, the diversion against which they have so indecorously set their faces."

"Would that a' my nobles and gentlemen possessed thy spirit, gude Rathsay," said the King, "to support their Sovereign Prince in his unalienable rights. But some there be,—we speak it wi' sorrow,—wha, like Gowrie, stain their rank wi' sic unprofitable itching after popularity, that ye shall scarce find them doing ought but wi' the view o' being capped and kneed by the multitude."

Rathsay, after this conversation with the King, did all in his power to encourage the theatrical representations, by distributing money to the lower class of the people, with the purpose of enticing them to attend the play-house. But though his example was followed in this by many of the court, the theatre continued to be sparingly attended ; and that only by the very scum of the metropolis. For although the act was immediately repealed which had forbidden the people to resort to this amusement, (the magistrates and citizens not chusing to provoke the renewal of those harsh measures which the King had resorted to in their last quarrel,) yet as the pulpits continued to resound with anathemas against all who should so far set at defiance the advice of their ministers, as to be seen in the house of Baal, they were hearkened to in fear and trembling ; and if any of a family ventured to cross the forbidden threshold, they were so railed upon by its other members, and rebuked by their ministers, when they came

to the knowledge of it, (which they seldom failed to do, through the tenderness of conscience, or officiousness of their neighbours,) that they rarely ventured to transgress in the same way again.

To James this was very provoking, and even more so to his consort, who not often entertaining the same views and feelings with him, yet never failed to do so most energetically, when they tended to the mortification or humiliation of the reformed clergy, against whom she cherished no small resentment for the godly admonitions they had from time to time bestowed upon her, and the reproofs they had administered against her immoderate love of such amusements as they considered sinful, vain, and idle. Among these stood foremost in the black catalogue of delinquencies, her passion for dancing and masquerades. Vainly, however, had they striven against these inventions of Satan—for, as old Heronshaw truly said, “they got little satisfaction at her hands.” She, however, never forgave

them for seeking to abridge her privilege of exhibiting herself in all those accomplishments and points of view which rendered her beauty and graces most conspicuous—gifts which she was so passionately fond of displaying, and which her inordinate vanity made her believe were scarcely equalled in any other woman. She was, moreover, of a bold and courageous nature, which never shrunk from contest with the fiercest spirits of the age, when they sought to cross her humour, and seldom failed, by authority or intrigue, to make them bow before her. The empty theatre was, therefore, a continual source of vexation and discontent to Anne, who, could she have but once seen it filled in defiance of the ministers, would have been somewhat mollified. She determined, however, to make an effort which she hoped might for once foil the clergy. She knew that the populace had been inordinately fond of what they termed *Robin-hood Plays*—that is, plays performed in a certain field, which had been set apart in

the neighbourhood of all Scottish towns, for their exhibition. These performances, in which the inhabitants of the respective towns were the actors, had become so necessary to their habits, and had produced such disorders, that since the Queen's arrival in Scotland there had been complaints against them in the General Assembly; and a few years previous to that period, an endeavour to suppress this diversion had so exasperated the multitude, that they seized the city gates, forced the tolbooth, liberated the prisoners, and turned the metropolis into a scene of anarchy and confusion. Calculating, therefore, on the natural taste of the people, and arguing from their strong prejudices in favour of such recreations, Anne determined to have a play exhibited in the Park, to which she hoped to draw all the population of the city before there should be time for the ministers to harangue their congregations against it. For this purpose, the Queen took her measures privately for its intended

performance, and communicated her scheme to James, whose displeasure against the ministers made him enter warmly into it; the more especially, as the preparations for a spectacle she determined to render as imposing as possible, were to be carried on secretly; for mystery, even in the most trifling matters, ever had a peculiar charm for him.

Having committed the arrangements to the care of Rathsay, who was to act by the Queen's directions, he informed him of the defeat prepared for the clergy, with all the waggish exultation displayed by a school-boy, when he communicates some plan of premeditated mischief to his companions.

This was an employment exactly suited to the present humour of Rathsay, who, coupling, ever since the affair at Montrose, the interests and feelings of the Earl of Gowrie with those of the clergy, sought to mortify him as well as them. He was the more confirmed in the idea of Gowrie's ta-

king part with the ministers in this matter of the players, from the Earl's having, as he thought, purposely seized the opportunity of absenting himself from Edinburgh, by paying a visit to his mother while the theatrical representations were going on. In this, however, he judged erroneously ; for the Earl having only spent a few hours with his mother in his way from England, at his seat of Dirlton, in East-Lothian, where she resided, had intended, for a length of time, to make her a longer visit, although he had hitherto been prevented from doing so by business, and his attendance at court, which, as we have seen, was rendered so unremitting by the influence of Lady Agnes. This influence he had, however, as he promised the Master of Ruthven, began to combat with all the strength of a powerful mind ; and being no longer, since the decided assertion of his independence at Montrose, received at Holyrood with the same cordiality, he had not a shadow of reason remaining by which he could excuse his con-

stant attendance there ; for even his wish of being a check on the conduct of the Queen, had been so defeated by the pains she took to provoke him, by compelling the attendance of his brother, and creating, as it were, necessary occasions of conversation and compliment between herself and him, that perceiving her intention, and imagining his absence might have a favourable effect in putting a stop to this species of bravado, which he clearly perceived was levelled at himself, he resolved again to try the effect of absence on the passion which he was sensible had acquired so dangerous an ascendancy over him.

But Rathsay, judging of the Earl by himself, never dreamed that, actuated by principle alone, he was capable of thus strenuously opposing his passion for Agnes, and therefore concluded that he could only have relinquished her society, that he might be saved the alternative of injuring his popularity with the clergy, by attending the theatre, or increasing the King's displea-

sure, by absenting himself from it. Of the Earl's attachment to Lady Agnes he was daily more and more convinced, as well as that it was in a great measure encouraged by her ;—for, goaded on by jealousy, and a determination to know his fate, he had taken advantage of the former short absence of Gowrie from the palace to press on his own suit with Lady Agnes, and after all gentler methods of dismissing him failed, had been rejected most pointedly and decidedly, if not, as he thought, somewhat haughtily. This refusal was even more wounding to his pride than his love, and his resentful spirit boiled over in acts of asperity to all around him. The only relief, therefore, that his heart knew at this period, was in conducting the Queen's plan with regard to the players, or in listening to the King, whose humour, since his being outvoted in the General Assembly, and the opposition made to the players, was quite as discontented and petulant as his own ;—

for it was suggested to him by Rathsay, and the other enemies of the Earl, that the powerful support which Gowrie had offered to the members of the Kirk at Montrose was considered by the parties, both for and against the question then agitated, as but the dawning of that vast influence, which his increasing popularity promised to render in time unbounded. To this James gave full credit, from his own observation of the spontaneous homage paid to the Earl by the multitude, which, even when he was present, displayed itself in murmurs of applause, or in shouts of triumph, whenever he appeared, frequently accompanied by the cries of—"Down with the Bishops!—long live the Earl of Gowrie, the supporter of the good cause!" The Earl's popularity was also much strengthened by his personal appearance, which presented to their sight all that was calculated to strike their imagination—manly beauty, grace, dignity, and condescension, surround-

ed by that appropriate magnificence, and noble liberality, which his princely possessions gave him the means of rendering so imposing.

All this was gall and wormwood to James, who constantly lamented his own folly in having restored to him the estates of his father, since such liberality, and the other acts of kindness shewn to his family, had failed of conforming him to all his wishes; for, though he well knew his private opinions in church government not to be in unison with his own, yet he had continued to flatter himself that the great benefits he had conferred on him and his family could not fail to bind him to his interest, in such measure as would at least prevent his openly espousing the cause of his adversaries, and that in time he might completely attach him to himself. The King's eyes were now, however, opened, and, no longer able to deceive himself with the hope of the Earl's becoming his tool, disgust and aversion were quickly succeed-

ing to the favourable impression which the mildness of Gowrie's manners, and his striking appearance, had at first made upon him. Rathsay had so frequently spoken to the disparagement of Gowrie, that the King, though unacquainted with the motives of his dislike, had not failed to notice its existence. It was to Rathsay, therefore, that James spoke openly of his dislike of the Earl, concealing it from others with his accustomed dissimulation; for if some change in the frankness of his manner had been visible to the brothers, it was not yet evident enough to attract the attention of spectators.

Gowrie had, however, thwarted both his Majesty and Rathsay in their leading passion, and the pride of each had equally suffered. Their dislike of him was therefore become an abiding principle, which was yet to shew itself in its effects, when time and opportunity should serve. Meanwhile, the King did not neglect to pry into the cause that rendered his page's sentiments of the

Earl so congenial to his own, and soon learned all the particulars of his disappointed passion from his favourite, whom he assured of his support and assistance, and, in evidence of his sincerity, wrote a letter with his own hand to Lord Somerdale, the uncle of Lady Agnes, expressive of his approbation of a union between her and Rathsay, and his earnest desire that he should lay his commands on his niece to receive him as her destined husband, and to prepare for her marriage immediately. But till an answer to this letter should arrive, it was determined between the King and Rathsay, that his Majesty should not interfere in his favour with Lady Agnes.

Meanwhile, Rathsay's hatred of Gowrie did not confine itself to him, but often broke out in his behaviour to Ruthven, whom he watched with the utmost assiduity, putting at all times the worst construction on the Queen's levity of conduct towards him ; nor did he scruple at times to suggest to his Royal Master such small

portions of these observations as might serve to set what he called the arrogance of Ruthven, and the undeserved favour which the Queen shewed him, in a conspicuous view, and to make the King himself a more strict observer of many small incidents which would otherwise have escaped him ;— for the jealousy of James was rather that of place and power, than of affection. That his marriage with Anne had been, like that of most other princes, the effect of expediency, unblessed by that freedom of choice and warmth of affection, which can alone confer happiness on the connubial state, whether of the king or the peasant, is vouched by the curious memorial he thought proper to leave his people when he embarked on his matrimonial expedition to Denmark. The uneasiness of James, therefore, proceeded more from his pride of prerogative being wounded, of which darling attribute, even in all its minor branches, he was ever the watchful guardian, than from the agony that attacks the heart of him

who apprehends the alienation of a beloved wife's affection; for to this he was abundantly indifferent.

Rathsay was thus **ever** like the demon-toad of Milton, infusing evil through his master's ear, and, as we **have** said, making him become himself an observer of the Queen and Ruthven, whose conduct gave but too great colour to his insinuations;—for the Queen, piqued by the interference of Gowrie, had become, as we before hinted, like all imprudent and headstrong people, determined to make the cause of offence more glaring, that she might shew the more her defiance of counsel.

The departure of Gowrie, however, did, as he had calculated, in some measure check this bravado of the Queen's; but the poison was already infused into the King's mind, which was doomed to work ruin and woe; and his Majesty putting the same construction on the Earl's absence from Edinburgh that Rathsay had done, his anger was still more inflamed against him,

—for neither was he capable of assigning the true motive which had caused the removal of the Earl.

Gowrie had been, for some time before his departure, extremely anxious to learn if Lady Agnes still adhered to her determination of retiring to a convent; but she so much dreaded the effect of his eloquence on the subject of her faith, that she had most assiduously shunned all private conversation with him. He could not, however, bear this suspense, for he still flattered himself, from the candid attention she had given them, that his arguments might possibly have weighed with her, in what was to him a matter of such momentous consideration;—if he could only keep her out of a convent, there was, he thought, at least a possibility of her one day becoming a convert to his own religion. On that hope, however improbable, did his whole existence seem to hang. When about to quit Edinburgh, he recollected a hundred arguments which he thought he had neglected

to urge, or had not enforced so strongly as he might have done. He therefore spent a great part of the night previous to his departure, in committing to paper, for her consideration, all that most forcibly struck him on the subject, apologizing at the same time for using the privilege of friendship which she had allowed him. This address breathed the deep and powerful eloquence of truth, and of energetic wishes that it might be the means of preventing her from taking the decisive step he so much deprecated.

The Earl enclosed this paper in a letter to his brother, mentioning its purport, and begging him to take a private opportunity of giving it to Agnes ; he then intrusted it to Laurence, to deliver it into the hands of the Master of Ruthven. Laurence had, however, caught a glimpse of the direction to the Lady Agnes as he busied himself in laying out the Earl's riding suit for the journey of the following day, and the next morning went to inform the Jesuit of this discovery, and shew him the packet. It may be conjectured

that he to whom he surrendered it did not allow so favourable an opportunity to escape him of learning the secrets of Agnes and Gowrie. He opened and read both letters, and, carefully closing them again, returned them to his confidant, who then delivered them to the Master.

It was with great surprise Lady Agnes received the letter addressed to her from the hands of Ruthven ; but when she had read it, all the doubts created by her former conversation with Gowrie, returned more forcibly than ever on her mind, and she thought, that if she remained at liberty, there was still hope ; for though her fears told her, that, according to human calculation, it was absurd to expect that he should ever embrace her faith, yet did she represent to herself that nothing was impossible with God ;—" and surely," said she, " never was a soul more worthy of a divine interposition, —and oh ! what happiness it then would be to join my destiny with his !"

This was the first time she had breathed

so distinct a wish, and she shrunk from the decided form her ideas had taken; for she was conscious it was an evil omen of the situation of her heart, when it could so audibly express its feelings on the most distant and improbable hopes. Yet to her young and ardent mind, the lesson of banishing all its delightful visions of fancy was hard, if not impossible; and all she could promise herself was, that she would guard her sentiments with the most scrupulous care, not only from the Earl himself, but from every human being, and that, seeking aid from above, she would endeavour to find the right path, and to follow it, whatever it might cost her. Thus did the innocent Agnes pray and resolve, in the singleness of her heart:—she was soon, however, to be put to the trial.

It was the custom of her Majesty to go out frequently on horseback, attended by the ladies of her court; and it was when Lady Agnes was one day attending the Queen in one of these expeditions, that, in

passing on her palfrey through the outer-gate of Holyrood, a venerable old man seized her bridle with one hand, so as to stop the progress of her horse for an instant, while he extended toward her with the other a blue bonnet that left his bald head and silver hairs exposed to the action of the air, while, fixing on her face his mild yet penetrating eyes, he sued for alms. Agnes, immediately recognizing her mother's confessor in the mendicant, stopped her palfrey, and seeing a small piece of paper in the crown of the bonnet, quickly understood the purport of the application for money, and drawing out her purse, deposited a piece of coin in lieu of the paper, which she crushed within her hand, and returned with her purse to her pocket, and, bending her head with a look of reverence to the old man, passed on, wondering what this might portend, but not daring to satisfy her curiosity by examining it till her return, when she read these words :—

“ If he who delivers this has in aught deserved the confidence of her to whom it is addressed, let her, at the hour of ten to-morrow night, join the faithful guide who will await her at the foot of the stairs leading from the north gallery through the under passage to the outward court, and who, after pronouncing her name, will conduct her a short distance from the palace to the bearer of this, who has matter of much importance to communicate, and who conjures her, by the memory of her mother, to fear nothing, and to disappoint him not.”

Thus adjured, by one whose sacred character she was bound to venerate, and the early recollections of whom were so strongly connected with the memory of her lamented mother, she hesitated not a moment in determining, at all hazards, to comply with the injunction, and waited impatiently for the time that was to conduct her to his presence.

The night fixed on for this interview was one dedicated by the Queen to the repre-

sentation of one of those masques in which she so greatly delighted, which was to be performed in the great hall of the palace by the English players, after the model of one written for the amusement of Queen Elizabeth's court. This circumstance had been seized on as particularly propitious to the absence of Agnes, giving her an opportunity of retiring to her own apartment when she might be supposed weary of the representation, and which, on the so much wished for night, she accordingly accomplished, without attracting the particular notice of any one, save Lady Beatrix and Featsay, who knew she was no particular admirer of the amusement, which so forcibly attracted every other person present.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

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